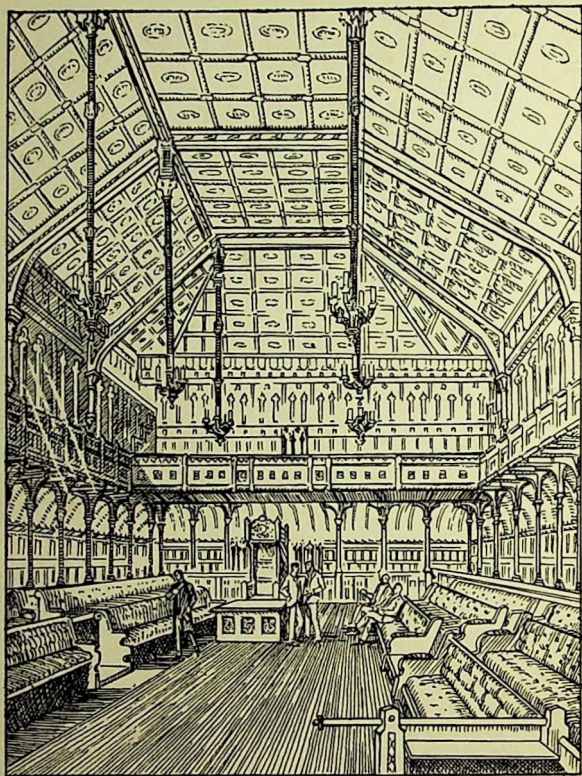


# THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT

BY  
K. GIBBERD

J. M. DENT & SONS LTD.



INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AS SEEN FROM THE BAR



# THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT

A BOOK OF CIVICS GIVING SOME  
ACCOUNT OF NATIONAL, LOCAL,  
IMPERIAL, & INTERNATIONAL  
GOVERNMENT

by

K. GIBBERD, M.A. [OXON]

*Author of "Workman's Fare"*

THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT, MADE FOR THE PEOPLE, MADE  
BY THE PEOPLE, AND ANSWERABLE TO THE PEOPLE.

*Daniel Webster.*

J. M. DENT AND SONS LTD.  
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## TO THE TEACHER

THIS book is based on lessons given to classes of varying ages between twelve and eighteen, and it has been the writer's aim to make it simple enough for use in Preparatory Schools or the lower forms of Senior and Secondary Schools, and yet not so childish as to be offensive to Sixth Forms, or even to students in training. The ground covered could, with advantage, be traversed leisurely in the course of two or three terms; but it might, nevertheless, be also undertaken in a single term or in a few weeks of concentrated study. It is hoped that these possibilities will make the following pages serviceable in different ways—as a suitable textbook for a Civics course in Senior Schools or in non-examination forms in Secondary Schools; as a purely temporary substitute for something else in a curriculum that does not ordinarily include Civics; as a means of profitably filling a difficult gap at the end of a term when public examinations are over. It is also hoped that it will prove sufficiently adaptable for the requirements of classes engaged on "Individual Work," or even for adult students who care to approach the subject from the realistic standpoint rather than from the point of view of theory.

The book has a twofold purpose. First, it is intended to serve as a simple introduction to some things which every future citizen and voter ought to know. Secondly, in making these things clear, it seeks to arouse an interest in the history that is being made day by day—the



history that is the outcome of that Public Opinion to which we all by our indifference, self-interest, ignorant prejudice, or enlightened public spirit, contribute a share.

"The need for instruction in Civics or Citizenship has long been recognized," says the Hadow Report, and few interested in education will disagree. But in practice the need continues to be ignored.

That the curriculum is already over-full, or that it is unwise to bring politics into the classroom, are reasons sometimes put forward in defence of this strange omission. But the real explanation is more often the indifference of the teacher; and so the vicious circle goes on from one generation to the next.

This book is based on the assumption that this indifference is not so general to-day as it was yesterday, that the experience of war, the spectacle of unemployment, the extension of the franchise, and an increase in social contacts have all contributed to make the teacher more aware of this strange confusion that we call democracy and that still stranger anomaly that we call world peace.

It is hoped that the design of the book will make it possible for those who have no special knowledge of political matters to approach the subject of the following chapters simultaneously with their pupils. Such a combination of the student and the teacher in one person would probably not be possible in any other subject than this, but here that background and sense of proportion which is part of the essential equipment for teaching anything will not be found to be wholly lacking, even in those who would consider themselves most ignorant of current affairs. Every adult necessarily assimilates some knowledge of the modern state, the modern world and the problems that vex both.

Discoloured it may be by prejudices and blurred by ignorance, but it is nevertheless a background and it will be accompanied by at least sufficient sense of relative values to avoid the mistake of confusing the spectacular with the important.

An interest in the subject, a due regard for the importance of political fair-mindedness, and a willingness to read a few books and newspapers, should enable teachers to find here a means of improving their own political education while trying to build in those they teach an awareness and an interest that were lacking in their own school days and after.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

If the questions and suggestions at the end of each chapter are to be made use of the class should have access to Whitaker's *Almanack*, some encyclopædia or general book of reference, and the daily papers.

For the chapters on Parliament the official report of Parliamentary Debates, known as "Hansard" and obtainable from H.M. Stationery Office, Kingsway, W.C.2, price sixpence, will prove extremely useful as giving a verbatim account of the work of the House of Commons from day to day; and to those students who are interested in the historical background of this part of the book *The Evolution of Parliament* by A. F. Pollard is especially to be recommended. As to the history of the growth of Local Government, most books on Local Government will be found to deal with it.

The reference books mentioned in connection with each chapter are merely meant as suggestions. They are, in most cases, either inexpensive or easily obtainable from libraries.



## TO THE YOUNG READER

IF you were going to visit a strange and interesting country you would first of all get yourself a Guide Book that would explain some of the things that you saw as you went about. But if you meant to explore the country thoroughly you would not find the Guide Book enough; you would ask questions of all kinds of people, you would read all kinds of public notices, and you would try to borrow other books written about special things in the country. Also, you would very likely have a notebook in which to write down the things you found out and perhaps your ideas about them.

In a way, this book is a Guide Book to a strange country. For although every one has heard about "the Government" and "the Lords," "the League of Nations" and "the County Council," and other such things mentioned here, if you think for a minute you will find that you do not know much more about them than you do about the sights of a country you have not visited—such as the pyramids of Egypt or the sky-scrapers of New York. So it is rather as if this book was about a place near at hand but which you had not thought of visiting before—although you must not take that to mean that it is only about the government of our own country. It is, indeed, mostly about what happens in England, but it is meant to guide you to things in other countries too; for, in these days what happens to us here in England or Wales or Scotland is often the result of

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what has happened in foreign places. This you will understand when you get to the end of the book.

A country is ten times more interesting to the visitor who explores it thoroughly than to the person who goes about just studying his Guide Book; so if you are going to enjoy this expedition you must do two things:

(1) Have a private notebook of your own.

(2) Be ready to find out all kinds of things from people, from newspapers, from other books, and from keeping your eyes open as you go about.

Each chapter is about somebody or something that helps to rule us and it tells you some of the more important things to be known. At the end of the chapter there is a list of other things to be found out, and sometimes a hint as to where to look. You will not, perhaps, be able to discover everything that is suggested, but, on the other hand, you may make some private discoveries of your own.

All the things you find out and any ideas you have about them should be written in your private notebook. You could also stick in pictures or newspaper cuttings to make it more interesting.

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## CHAPTER I

### HIS MAJESTY THE KING

<sup>QUEENS</sup> Kings in fairy tale and history—The Royal Prerogative—Honours—"The <sup>HER</sup> King reigns but does not rule"—<sup>QUEEN</sup> Kings, Presidents, and Dictators—Advantages in having a King—The King's work and influence.

ASK yourself what was your earliest idea of the King. <sup>QUEEN</sup>

Very likely you thought of him as sitting always on a throne, clad in royal robes and with a crown upon <sup>FR</sup> his head. Perhaps you believed that he had such great power that no one dared disobey his commands. If he willed it, people were sent to their death or thrust into prison—so you may have thought. Most of us can remember having once had some such ideas as these, and they probably came to us from fairy stories.

As we grow older, however, our ideas change. We take up a picture paper and find a photograph of the King in a bowler hat driving through London in an ordinary motor car. We go to the cinema and see him in plus fours, setting off with some of his friends to shoot wild duck.

Moreover, we gradually come to realize that the government of the country is more in the hands of the Prime Minister and Parliament than in the power of His Majesty.

There was a time, however, when the English King was not so far removed from the King in fairy tales. Edward III always succeeded in getting the money

he demanded when he wanted to pursue his hobby of making war on France. Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth, whom we cannot think of as dressed in any but the most gorgeous style, at times removed to prison or the scaffold those people they were tired of having about them.

Very gradually our Kings and Queens have lost something of their splendour and nearly all their power, for gradually through the centuries the people of England have come to think that it is better for their laws to be made and their taxes to be fixed by representatives chosen by themselves than that the Sovereign should be all-powerful in these matters. With this loss of importance it is natural that the King should usually go about in the same kind of clothes as any of his subjects, and enjoy such ordinary pastimes as shooting game, reading biographies, and collecting stamps.

The story of this change probably begins with King John and the Magna Carta, and many people feel that King George V has completed it because he makes no attempt to assert himself, and has always accepted the wishes of his people in all things.

But we are an odd nation. You would think that having decided that royal power was a mistake we should have abolished the King altogether—like France and other countries that have decided to have a President instead. You will remember that once the English people—or some of them—did decide to do this. After the execution of Charles I they drew up this solemn declaration:

*"Whereas it hath been found by experience that the office of a King . . . is unnecessary, burdensome, and dangerous to the liberty, safety, and public interest of*



*the people . . . be it therefore enacted and ordained . . . that the office of King shall not henceforth reside in or be exercised by any one single person."*

But eleven years later they drew up another equally solemn declaration saying that it was according to the ancient laws of the country that there *ought* to be a King, and so they put Charles II on the throne. Since then England has never been without a King or Queen; the same second that one dies the heir to the throne succeeds to the Crown. 1660

It is perhaps strange enough to insist on having a King even though his power has gone to the Prime Minister and Parliament, but what is strangest of all is that we pretend that the King still rules. It is as if we were all concerned in a game of make-believe.

For instance, every time that an ordinary law is made by Parliament the first words of the law are, "*Be it enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice of the Lords . . . and Commons,*" as if the King made the law and was only advised by the members of the House of Lords and the House of Commons. As we shall see later, all the King has to do is to give his consent to the new law when it is all ready to be enacted; and no King or Queen has said "No" to any law since the days of Queen Anne.

When the Prime Minister finds the majority of the members of Parliament are against him and his followers he usually decides that there must be a General Election. He goes to the King with his decision and the King declares Parliament to be "dissolved."

No one else can make this declaration, and although the King now does it at the suggestion of the Prime Minister we still say that it is his especial "prerogative" or right. In the same way, it is also a royal

prerogative to order the General Election and to announce the day when Parliament is to meet, although these things are partly decided by law and partly arranged for by other people.

We also say that the King has the "prerogative of mercy"—meaning that he has the right to order the release of someone who has been found guilty of a great crime and sentenced to death. But when a criminal is pardoned in this way, it is the Home Secretary, the Minister who is in charge of all prisons and other forms of punishment, who decides that the pardon is to be given—although it is announced in the King's name:

*"We,<sup>1</sup> in consideration of some circumstances represented to Us, are graciously pleased to extend Our Grace and Mercy unto him, and to grant him Our Free Pardon for the offence for which he stands convicted."*

Another prerogative which we pretend the King still has is that of giving people important positions.

The Prime Minister is said to be appointed by the King, but whoever is the leader of the largest party in Parliament (Liberal, Labour or Conservative) is the man who by custom has this office. Who is going to be Prime Minister, therefore, depends on the result of a General Election, and the King has usually no choice at all.

When the King sends for the leader of the winning party and asks him to be Prime Minister, he also asks him to choose the other Ministers; and the new Prime Minister goes back from Buckingham Palace to his home and begins this difficult task. Finally, he draws up a long list which says who shall be Lord Chancellor, who Foreign Secretary, who Home Sec-

<sup>1</sup> The King always speaks of himself as "We."

retary, who Chancellor of the Exchequer, and so on. This he takes to the King, and the next day it is announced that the King has appointed all these people to their various offices.

Not only the Ministers but the officers in the army and navy, and the archbishops of the Church are appointed, in this way, in the King's name.

Then there are "Honours." On certain occasions, including New Year's Day, the King's Birthday, and after a General Election, some of the King's subjects who have distinguished themselves are given titles such as Knight, Baronet, Viscount, or Dame (for a woman). These are known as "Honours," and, again, the business of deciding them rests with the Prime Minister although they are said to be given by the King.

A little while ago there was much talk over the question as to what people ought to be singled out for titles. Most of us would agree that a writer, a musician, or scientist ought to be considered a suitable person for inclusion in the Honours List—and it is for merits of this kind that James Barrie, the author of *Peter Pan*, was made a Baronet, and that Clara Butt, the great singer, was made a Dame. Most people would also agree that any one who stands out as having done the country a service ought also to be honoured—like Baden-Powell, the founder of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, who is now a Baron. But it is also a not unusual thing for a Prime Minister to include in his Honours List any men who have given large sums of money to the funds of his party. Sometimes the more money a man has paid over to his party, the more important is the title he has been given, so that it has seemed that any rich man who longed to be a marquess or a

viscount could buy the title if he was willing to pay enough money. It did not seem right that this kind of thing should be done in the King's name and when the whole matter was looked into by a Royal Commission (that is, a special committee) some years ago it was agreed that it ought to stop.

From all that has been said you will now understand what is meant when people say that in these days "the King reigns but does not rule." He has all the honour of doing the important things without actually doing them.

You may find it quite interesting to try to think out some good reasons for this rather odd arrangement.

The first and foremost reason is probably just that it pleases us. It appeals to the British people. Many countries would say it was merely a confusion to pretend the King did everything when he really did nothing. But we seem to want to combine two things. We want to be "democratic," that is to say we want to put the business of government only into the hands of the men and women we have ourselves elected, but at the same time we do not want to lose all the pleasure and excitement of having a King. This is very typical of the British. Again and again you find we keep up some show and ceremony when the real reason for it has gone. Why do sailors wear black ties? Because they were first introduced as a sign of mourning for Lord Nelson. And at every opening of Parliament as well as on every November 5th a solemn procession of "beefeaters" and others still goes through the cellars under the Houses of Parliament because once Guy Fawkes was found there with his gunpowder.

Then, of course, it is very convenient to have someone whom we all accept as representing the country



as a whole. When distinguished foreigners come to visit us, the King stands for all when he welcomes and entertains them. When the King of Afghanistan paid us a visit the whole population could not shake hands with him and invite him to a banquet. The King did it for us. And when someone does a brave action and the King sends for him and pins a medal on his coat, it is done on behalf of us all.

Every country needs someone to act as its head. In a Kingdom it is the King; in a Republic, the President. There are more Republics than Kingdoms in the world to-day. The idea behind a Republic is that every one starts with equal rights and so, not only can there be no King, but there should be no noble families with titles that are handed on from father to son. The President is elected to act as head of the country for so many years. Sometimes, like the President of France, he has no more power than our King, but the French people would say that they prefer to elect an ordinary man to to represent them rather than leave this honour to a Royal Family which is supposed to be different from the rest of the people. In the United States of America, however, the President is a much more important person and is not expected to keep in the background and let his Parliament rule without him. He must take a lead, although he has to get his Parliament to agree with him about any very important matter. One or two other countries, on the other hand, have lately gone to another extreme and given all the power to one man who is neither King nor President. This happened in Italy when Mussolini gathered together a band of followers called Fascists, dressed them out in black shirts (hence their nickname "Black Shirts") taught them to obey orders, and finally insisted on

governing the country himself, with the Fascists to punish people who did not obey him. He was called "Il Duce" (The Leader) in Italy, but his position has been for years that of a Dictator, that is a man who rules the country entirely by himself for the time being.

Something not altogether different happened in Russia when Lenin formed a band of followers called Communists and with their help did very much as he liked. When he died the Communists thought so much of him that they embalmed him, and any one who goes to Moscow now can see the dead Dictator.

It is very important to remember that although human nature is the same underneath, the peoples of the world are different from each other in what they like and what they do not like in customs and forms of government.

One very good reason for having a King for our country instead of a President or a Dictator has not yet been mentioned—we need a royal figure-head for our Empire. Presidents and Dictators come and go, but a King reigns until he dies and then his heir takes his place. You can see that a Royal Family is a better figure-head than a man who has to be changed every few years. Electing a new President might be bothering enough for those of us who live in the Mother Country, but people in the Dominions would no sooner have become used to one President than a stranger would take his place. The King went to India some years ago to make Delhi the new city for the Indian Parliament. Very likely he will not go again, but when his son succeeds to the throne the people of India will not feel it is someone quite different from the Emperor they saw in 1911. The more important countries in the Empire, of course, have their own Parliaments and Prime Ministers just like the Mother Country. In each

country there is a Viceroy or a Governor-General, who is a substitute for the King.

Another advantage in having a King rather than a President is that a King must not favour any political party. If our King feels secretly either Liberal, Labour, or Conservative, he must keep his sympathies to himself and try to be fair to all three parties. But a President, in the days before he is elected President, is usually well known as a party leader. The German President, Marshal von Hindenburg, belonged to the "Nationalists," who are in Germany the opposite party to the Socialists, and some of the Socialists in Germany must have found it rather difficult to look up to him as Head of their country. It must have been difficult for Hindenburg, too, to be fair all round—although he seems to have succeeded very well.

Before ending this chapter let us see what the Sovereign of Great Britain and of the British Empire really has to do in these days.

In the first place he is a figure-head—that is to say, on certain occasions he has to be there and make an affair important by his very presence. He has to open Parliament, he must be present at the Cenotaph for the Service on Armistice Day, he must visit big exhibitions, open new buildings, as well as occasionally visiting the Dominions or foreign countries. This last duty may do much to promote friendly feelings between ourselves and other countries. The Prince of Wales shares his father's work, but even so it takes up a great deal of time, and you would be surprised to find how many engagements the King has in a year. On many of these occasions he has to make a speech, and although his secretaries help him by giving him useful information and suggestions, he likes to decide himself what he is going to say.

Then there are endless documents that want his signature before they mean anything, and whether he uses a seal or writes with his own hand this takes a long time and must be rather tiring. When Queen Victoria died she had got very behind with this part of her work and her son, King Edward VII, found five thousand two hundred papers awaiting his signature. No wonder that the sovereign has been called a "signing machine."

Then again it is the business of the King's Ministers to keep His Majesty informed as to all that they are doing; so that although the King does not govern he is expected to take a great interest in what the people who do govern are doing. You can imagine that as well as the affairs of Government he ought also to take an interest in what is happening in the world at large. It is said that the present King, in order to do this, reads thirty newspapers a day. This does not, of course, mean that he reads them all from beginning to end. He looks at two or three London papers before breakfast, but all the more important papers in the country are taken in at Buckingham Palace, and it is the duty of the King's secretaries to mark in blue pencil any items that are likely to be of special interest to the King. These are considered by His Majesty later, perhaps during the course of his morning's work in his office, a large room on the first floor of Buckingham Palace where the Sovereign sits at a roll-top desk with telephone, card-indexes and dispatch boxes close at hand.<sup>1</sup>

There is also a tremendous correspondence to be attended to. Besides his own friends and relations and various important officials at home and abroad, all kinds of people write to the King asking for money,

<sup>1</sup> *The English King*, Macdonagh.



or wanting him to take an interest in some society or to help someone in trouble.

The King is for ever receiving and entertaining people—Ambassadors from abroad, Ministers at home as well as his own relations and friends. And in the many conversations that take place between the King and a Prime Minister, between the King and an Ambassador, there is a chance for the King to give good advice. Once it was the Minister who advised the King, but now it is really the King who advises his Ministers. They are not bound to take his advice, of course; and we may be sure he is not anxious to force it on them. King George V keeps more in the background than did his father and is less ready to proclaim his opinions than was his grandmother. Queen Victoria was ever ready to give her point of view about great or small matters. Once when her Home Secretary pardoned a burglar who had been convicted of murder because a woman whom he had gagged had been suffocated by the dislodgement of her false teeth, she rebuked him. "I maintain," she said, "that old ladies who wear false teeth are entitled to the protection of the law."<sup>1</sup>

If we consider the matter carefully we shall perhaps come to the conclusion that the King's power has not disappeared altogether. It has changed. Standing apart from party politics, and trained for his task from his boyhood, and with every opportunity of meeting his Ministers and foreign Ambassadors, he still has a great opportunity to uphold justice and right. But now he must do it behind the scenes and through personal influence. No one knows how much he does.

Certainly the King's job is no light one and the

<sup>1</sup> *The English King*, Macdonagh.

privileges of his position would not make many people jealous. Although his car has no number and is not restricted by any speed limit, he cannot take a drive in the country when he happens to feel inclined for it. His letters go without a stamp and his telegrams are sent before any one else's, but even when he goes for a short holiday a telegraph service is connected to his suite of rooms and he has a great deal of work to attend to before he turns to pleasure.

There are occasions, of course, still, when we see him in all the pomp and splendour that attended earlier rulers. When he goes in royal robes and gorgeous coach to open Parliament, or presides at a banquet where his guests eat off the famous gold plate, it sounds like old times. And when the King travels by train with a pilot going ahead, a whole line of plate-layers looking after the railway line, and a body-guard on board, it is difficult not to think that he is indeed the ruler.<sup>1</sup>

But when we hear that he likes collecting foreign stamps and that he is fond of ice cream and all kinds of fruit, and that he gets influenza like most other people we remember that he is as good a representative of the ordinary people as any President. Moreover, in the privacy of their home the King and Queen live very simply, with only their domestic servants to attend them. Those who have met the King here are always impressed by the simple and courteous reception they receive. Perhaps the strong moral influence which King George V is said to have is largely the result of this life behind the scenes; for people are most likely to follow the example of those whose lives seem like their own and to accept suggestions made in the course of personal and friendly conversa-

<sup>1</sup> *Lords and Commons*, Sir Henry Lucy.

tion. One well-known instance of a fine example set by the King was the economy introduced into the Royal Household during the war, especially in the banishment of wines and spirits from the Royal Table. But the true measure of the King's good influence cannot be known; it can only be suspected in the deep and sincere affection which is shown for him by his subjects.

#### QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON CHAPTER I

##### Pictures for your notebook

Stick in, side by side, a picture of any early King of England and a newspaper photograph of the King to-day in ordinary clothes.

If you can get them, put in pictures of Buckingham Palace and of the other two homes of the King in England.

##### Things to find out for yourself

1. Make a list of some of the useful things done by the King and the Royal Family during the next week.

2. Find about five people who have had "Honours" given them. Write down their names, their new titles and the reasons why the Honours have been conferred.

3. Write down a few countries that have Kings and a few that have Presidents.

4. Who is the present President of Russia. Who is the present President the United States.

5. In what ways do we speak of the King besides saying "the King."

6. Find any other words meaning Act of Parliament.

##### Clues

Newspapers.

The newspapers on 1 Jan. or 3 June or at the time of the ending or opening of Parliament.

Whitaker's *Almanack*. Newspapers. Encyclopædia.

Whitaker's *Almanack*. Newspapers.

##### Meaning of words

It is a good idea to keep the last pages of your notebook as a kind of vocabulary of new words that you will want to know

in reading this book. The best thing to do is to divide the page into two columns, one very narrow and one very wide. You write the new word in the first column, and in the other, taking several lines if necessary, you write both the explanation and a short sentence showing how the word is used. A dictionary (if it is a good one, and not one of the very cheap pocket kind) will help you with the explanation, but you will have to make up the sentence yourself.

What are the meanings of the following words: prerogative, republic, dictator, democracy, autocracy?

#### Things to think out for yourself

1. Make a list of the advantages of having a King, and another list of the advantages of having a President.
2. Do you think the King ought to have more power than he has?

#### A Game

The class divides into different groups for acting. Each group in turn represents in dumb show some important event connected with a King in past times, or else one of the ordinary duties of the sovereign to-day. The audience guesses what is being represented.

#### Reference books

Any book on Civics will contain some information on the subject of the King, but not much more than is given in the preceding pages. Two of the best are *How We are Governed*, by J. A. Marriott (Cambridge University Press), and *How Britain is Governed*, by Kate Rosenberg (Labour Publishing Company). Both these will also be very useful for the chapters that follow. For illustrative details of the life of a sovereign to-day reference may be made to the following, all of which, except perhaps the last, should be easily obtainable from any public library:

*The English King*, M. Macdonagh.

*Queen Victoria*, L. Strachey.

*Letters of Queen Victoria*.

*King Edward VII*, Sir Sidney Lee.

*King George V* (a political rather than personal biography),  
Sir George Arthur.

There are various books and articles on Mussolini and Lenin, but it is important to look out for and reckon with the political bias that animates nearly all of them.



## CHAPTER II

## THE HOUSE OF LORDS

The Palace of Westminster—Appearance of the House of Lords—The Woolsack—The Bar—The Strangers' Gallery—The Lords Temporal and Spiritual—The Law Lords—The Lord Chancellor—A sitting of the House of Lords—The Power of the House of Lords—The Reform of the House of Lords—The Royal Assent.

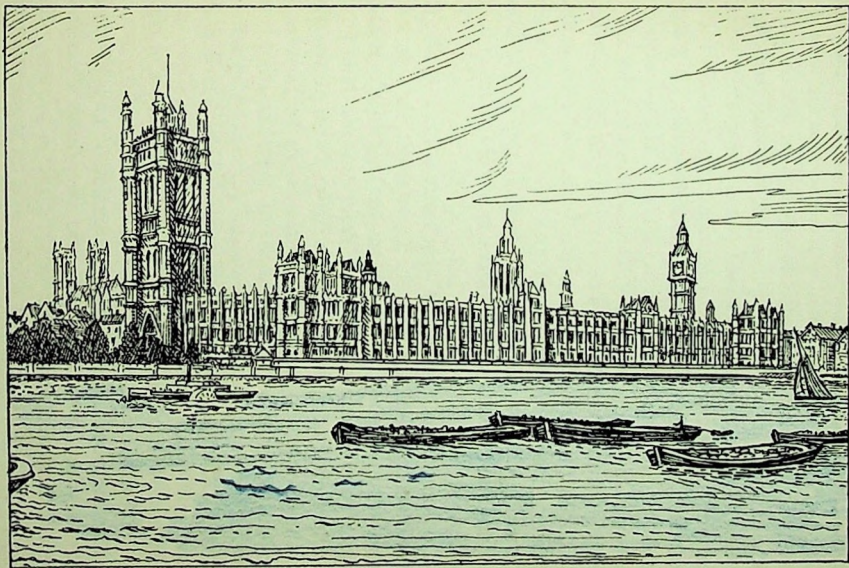
THERE must be very few people in Great Britain who would not recognize a picture of the Houses of Parliament if they saw it. The building looks rather fine, standing up above the Thames at Westminster, although some people who are interested in architecture do not consider it to be so splendid when looked at close at hand. You might think at first that it was a very old building, for it is built in imitation of the architecture of five hundred years ago; but nearly all that you see is less than one hundred years old; almost all the old building was destroyed by fire in 1834. The name "Houses of Parliament" is rather misleading since it is really all one vast building, and when we speak of the "House of Lords" and the "House of Commons" we mean two large rooms or "Chambers" on the main floor. The whole building is still sometimes called the "Palace of Westminster" because once the Sovereign lived there.

Besides the two great rooms where the two "Houses" meet there are, as you may imagine, a great many other rooms. There are dining-rooms, smoking-rooms, libraries, offices for ministers, and a great number of committee rooms for small meetings. The building also contains the old Westminster Hall, an old and beautiful hall that luckily escaped the fire in 1834, as

well as another earlier fire in the reign of Henry VIII. It was here that King Charles I was tried and condemned to death, for this used to be the great law court.

On Saturday, so long as both Lords and Commons are not having more than a week-end holiday, you can go into the Palace of Westminster for nothing. You will only be allowed to see certain rooms, but these will include the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Unfortunately, as it is Saturday, neither the Lords nor the Commons will be "sitting," so both these rooms will be empty except for visitors like yourself and officials to guide you and to see that you do not do any damage.

The House of Lords will perhaps give you the feeling that you are in church. It is a very lofty room with a carved roof and stained glass windows and a great deal of gilt decoration. It is sometimes called the "gilded chamber." On either side you find rows of seats facing each other, the back rows higher than the front ones, like the seats of the choir in a cathedral, and where the altar would be stand the thrones of the King and Queen, and a smaller seat for the Prince of Wales a little apart. They are covered up at present under a red cloth. Red seems to be the chief colour and it makes a rich effect. The seats, or rather benches, where the Lords sit are upholstered in red leather; the raised platform where the thrones are placed, as well as the three steps leading up to it, are covered with a red carpet. And in front of the thrones is something that looks rather like a red double bed without any head or foot to it. This is called the "Woolsack," and it is the seat of the Lord Chancellor, for whose comfort a small back support is raised in the middle. This strange seat goes far back into history.



THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER AS SEEN FROM THE RIVER

In front of the Woolsack and between the two rows of benches are two similar couches, of single-bed size. Any lord who feels inclined can come and sit here and listen to a debate. There is plenty of room to recline and rest one's head on one's hand, which no doubt is rather more pleasant sometimes than sitting upright on the ordinary benches. In front of this, and also between the two rows of benches, is a large table where the three Clerks of the House sit, and beyond this again are a few "cross benches" which we shall explain presently. The farther end of the House is fenced off by a little wooden wall. This is known as the "Bar." Members of the House of Commons can come within this enclosure and listen to a debate, and in past times wrong-doers have come here to be sentenced.

Looking up on each side you notice, first of all, the carved oak panelling and then, between this and the great stained-glass windows, a little gallery with a single row of seats. This is reserved for the wives of the Lords or distinguished visitors, but at the end of the House, opposite the Thrones, there is a large projecting gallery with the front part reserved for newspaper reporters and the back for anybody who is given a ticket by one of the Lords. This is called the Strangers' Gallery.

It is now time to find out who exactly has the right to "sit" in the House of Lords.

The members of this House consist of two kinds of people—the *Lords Temporal* and the *Lords Spiritual*. By the first we mean the *peers*, that is to say, men with important titles that are passed on from one man to his eldest son or nearest heir. They include Dukes, Marquesses, Earls, Viscounts, and Barons. Some Lords, of course, have only lately been created by a recent



Honours List, while others have inherited their titles down the centuries. It must also be remembered that there are a number of titles that do not bring with them the right to sit in the House of Lords. Knights, for instance, have not this privilege, nor have Baronets, even though that title is hereditary.

Besides the English Peers, the House of Lords includes the Scottish and Irish Peers, but this must not be taken to mean that all the Peers from Scotland and Ireland belong to the House. In the case of these two countries only a certain number are chosen to be members of the House.

Sometimes a peer's title descends to a woman because there is no male heir, and she becomes a peeress "in her own right," which means that the title is really hers and she is not a peeress merely because she happened to marry a peer. But although women are allowed to be members of the House of Commons, they cannot belong to the House of Lords. Lady Rhondda, who is a living viscountess in her own right, tried hard for this, but the Noble Lords would not have her. On the whole this House does not like changes.

So far we have only spoken of the Lords Temporal. The House of Lords also includes the Lords Spiritual. These are the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and twenty-four bishops. You will remember that in early times the King used to have the Lords of the Church about him as well as the great barons, so you can see how the bishops and archbishops came to be here.

There are also among the Lords six famous judges, sometimes spoken of as the "Law Lords" or "Lords of Appeal." These are the only members of this House, with the exception of the Lord Chancellor, who receive a salary. It is their business to sit as Judges when the



House of Lords becomes a final court of appeal; for it is the right of any one who wishes to do so to appeal from the ordinary law courts to the House of Lords. On these occasions the Lord Chancellor, who is always a lawyer, presides, but the ordinary peers stay away, unless any of them happen to be ex-judges.

The Lord Chancellor is the most important member of the House of Lords. He is chosen by the Prime Minister, and he is paid a large salary. His job is to preside over the House, but unlike the Speaker in the House of Commons he cannot command the obedience of the members. In the House of Commons if two people want to speak at once the Speaker decides who it shall be. But the Lord Chancellor has not this power in his House, and if two Noble Lords are so impolite to each other that both insist on speaking they must either both talk at once or all the other Lords present must vote as to whom they will hear.

We will now imagine that a member of the House of Lords has presented you with a ticket for the Strangers' Gallery and that you go one afternoon to listen to a debate. Both the Houses begin their meetings in the afternoon (except on Fridays) as the members have committees to attend and a great deal of other business to do in the mornings. The Lords usually meet only three afternoons in the week and, unlike the Commons who go on until eleven o'clock and sometimes later, they often finish in time for an eight o'clock dinner. Although they are called the "Upper Chamber" and are always treated on special occasions as being more important than the Commons, they have actually much less power and much less to do. About four o'clock, then, one afternoon you find the right doorway, make your way along a wide corridor called St. Stephen's

Hall, pass by a number of wall paintings illustrating the history of England, and show your paper ticket to a number of different policemen, until you arrive at the little staircase leading to the Strangers' Gallery. At the top of this you read a notice saying that you must on no account make a disturbance. Then you sign a large book, give up your ticket to an official, go through a swing door and make for a good seat in the front of the gallery.

The day's "sitting," as each meeting is called, has just begun. There below, at the other end of the House, is the Lord Chancellor, in his wig and gown, sitting on the Woolsack. Behind him you can just see the Mace, which is a sign that this is a proper meeting of the House. The Mace stands for power. It is a long bejewelled thing, not very much like the mace of old times, which was a knotted club that our savage ancestors used in fighting.

You are surprised to find so few peers present, remembering there are over seven hundred altogether, and perhaps also surprised to find them ordinary-looking people. A man on the benches to the right of the Lord Chancellor first attracts your attention because he wears black and white robes. That is where the Lords Spiritual sit, and to-day he happens to be the only bishop present. About twenty other men are scattered about the rest of the red benches, listening to one who stands in his place making a speech. There is nothing to show that these people are marquesses or earls or barons, for they are wearing ordinary clothes, just like the members of the House of Commons. Most of them are elderly, but one or two are quite young men.

At the table, before a pile of books, sit the three Clerks of the House. They are lawyers and they

wear wigs and gowns. You can only just see them as you crane your neck forward, but the cross benches which are behind them are hidden from you by the gallery in which you sit. Nor can you see the Bar of the House which is right under you, nor the specially enclosed seat of Black Rod which is close to the Bar. Black Rod is the messenger who goes on certain occasions to the House of Commons to summon the members of that House to the Bar of the House of Lords.

The members of this House have their appointed places. The Archbishops and Bishops, as we have seen, always sit to the right of the Lord Chancellor. The Lords on the next benches to the right are those who belong to the Governing Party (Conservative, Labour, or Liberal—whichever won the last election). The Lords on the opposite side belong to the Opposition—that is, the other two parties. And if any Lord does not belong to any of the three parties he may sit on the cross benches, behind the table and facing the Lord Chancellor.

All this time one of the Lords is making a speech. Speeches in this House are often rather long, and they are listened to more politely and patiently than often happens in the House of Commons.

Presently we realize that the Noble Lord is talking about Unemployment and that he is asking the House to pass a Bill that has already been passed in the Commons. All Bills have to be passed by both Houses and then receive the King's assent before they become law. The speaker is on the Governing Party's side of the House and the Bill is evidently one that his party are very anxious to get through. As he goes on, besides following his arguments we gradually learn some of the customs of the House. He refers to the members

he is addressing as "My Lords," and when he speaks of this Bill having been already discussed in the House of Commons he calls that House "another place." This is the way in which one House always refers to the other. You may notice that occasionally during this speech someone strolls in behind the railing that shuts off the thrones. A few privileged people are allowed to do this. You will also notice that the Lords do not feel bound to sit still all the time. Some of them may get up and quietly go out—perhaps they are bored or hungry. Others may walk across to someone on the benches on the other side and sit down and whisper some remark. You cannot tell whether it is about this Unemployment Bill or not.

Finally the speaker sits down and someone else gets up. Then follows another long speech—this time against the Bill. Occasionally there may be a murmur of "Hear, hear"; but for the most part the Lords lean back in their comfortable red benches and listen like a patient congregation to a long sermon.

Similar long speeches follow and some may be very interesting if you know the present state of Unemployment and what this proposed new law is trying to do for it. It seems as if any one who feels inclined may stand up and follow on when one speaker has sat down; but it has been arranged beforehand who is going to take part in the debate. Those who are interested will have given in their names to the Lord Chancellor.

At the end of the debate a vote will be taken and the Lord Chancellor will ask those who are "content" that the Bill shall be passed to go out into the Lobby (a long corridor) to his right, and those who are "not content" to pass into the Lobby on his left. There they will be counted. But we will not wait for this

"Division" (as such voting is always called in Parliament), for it is the same as a Division in the House of Commons to be described in a later chapter.

Divisions in the House of Commons are much more important than in the House of Lords. Why?

Because although, as has been said, all Bills have to be passed by the Lords, as well as by the Commons, the Lords are not expected to reject a Bill that the Commons want. A Bill about money matters they are not allowed to reject at all. Other Bills can be rejected three times, and if the Lords still will not agree to them, and the Commons still want them, then after a period of two years, when the King has given his assent, they become law in spite of the Upper House. This was laid down in the Parliament Act of 1911, and the House of Lords at that time was forced to agree to the measure; for if they had not passed it, the Prime Minister at that time intended asking the King to create enough new peers who believed in the Act to outvote the rest. Naturally the Lords did not want to find their benches crowded out by a lot of upstart barons and marquesses all created for the occasion and likely to attend their House afterwards with intent to make it do what the "other place" wanted.

No doubt, also, many of the Lords at the time believed in the idea behind the Parliament Act, which was that the *elected* House and not the *hereditary* House should have the chief power in making new laws for a democratic country.

So the days have gone by when the Lords could "exercise their *veto*" (the Latin for "I forbid"). They can no longer forbid a Bill that the Commons really want. But what they can do is to propose "amendments"—small changes that are meant to improve



the Bill. Sometimes a Bill is rather hurried through the busy House of Commons, sometimes certain points are overlooked. In the calm atmosphere of the House of Lords these points may be discovered and put right. It must be remembered, also, that Bills can begin in the House of Lords, and be sent to the Commons afterwards.

A great many people are anxious about what they call the "Reform of the House of Lords." But although they are all dissatisfied with the Upper Chamber as it is at present, their ideas as to what is to be done are not all the same. Some people want to keep the membership of the House as it is at present, but to give back the power that was taken from it in 1911. Others want to change the membership of the House as well as to change its powers. They tell us to look at other countries and compare their Second Chambers with ours. Ours is the only House of *Lords* in the world. No other country has a Second Chamber in which nearly every member is there by hereditary right. In most other countries the Senate (which is the usual name for a Second Chamber) is elected, although perhaps in some different way from the Lower House. In France, for instance, the Senators are elected by the Local Councils. So it is often proposed that we shall do away, not with the Lords themselves, but with the right their titles give to share in the government of the country, and that we shall have an elected House instead. But when it comes to the point you always find that the British people hate giving up their old customs entirely, and so if the House of Lords is reformed it is more likely that we shall try at one and the same time to keep it as it is and change it, by making it a mixture of hereditary peers and new elected representatives of the people.

On one occasion the House of Lords is the scene of great splendour. This will be described in another chapter. Often also it is the scene of a quaint old ceremony, and with an account of it we will conclude this chapter.

The two thrones are now uncovered; but it cannot be that the King is coming or there would surely be more noble Lords sitting about the red benches. Before the thrones is a long narrow red couch. The door to the left opens and three men dressed in scarlet robes, trimmed with ermine, come in. The noble Lords all rise in their places and the three figures sit on the red couch. They have been holding cocked hats in their hands and they now place them on their heads. The middle figure you can perhaps recognize as the Lord Chancellor. He now addresses Black Rod. "Let the Commons know," he says, "that the Lords desire their immediate attendance in this place without delay."

Presently underneath the gallery where you sit you hear the Commons gathering. The Speaker will be in the front. No doubt he bows as the red-robed figures raise their hats to greet him.

The meaning of the ceremony then becomes clear, for the Lord Chancellor explains that the Royal Assent has been given to certain Acts of Parliament. Then the Chief Clerk rises and reads a statement which is supposed to come from the King explaining that the "said Acts" cannot become law without the Royal Assent and that each of these three noble Lords have been asked to act on His Majesty's behalf. As each Lord is mentioned by name and called "our well-beloved and faithful councillor" he raises his cocked hat. The statement goes on to declare that His Majesty having given his assent to certain Acts the

Clerks are required "to pass the same with the usual form and words."

One Clerk then stands to the right of the table and the other to the left. The Clerk on the right reads out the title of each Act and to each one the Clerk on the left says: "*Le roy le veult*," or "*Soit fait comme il est désiré*," or, for Money Bills, "*Le roy remercie ses bons sujets, accepte leur b n volence, et ainsi le veult*." Now and again they bow to the Lords Commissioners, who raise their hats in acknowledgment.

When all the Bills have thus formally received the King's assent the Mace is borne out and the Lords Commissioners retire.

## QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON CHAPTER II

### Pictures for your notebook

Stick in any of the following that you can get: The Houses of Parliament as seen from the outside. The inside of the House of Lords. Some members of the House of Lords to-day.

Draw a ground-plan of the House of Lords showing where the various people sit.

### Things to find out for yourself

1. What is the style of architecture in which the Houses of Parliament are built?

2. Why is the building sometimes called St. Stephen's?

3. Find out all you can about the Second Chamber of any foreign country, or of any of our self-governing colonies.

4. What did the House of Lords do on ———? (Choose any day when they met.)

5. Who is the present Lord Chancellor?

### Clues

Encyclop dia.

Encyclop dia.

Encyclop dia.  
Whitaker's *Almanack*.

Newspapers.

Whitaker's *Almanack*.  
Newspapers.

### Meaning of words

Democracy and democratic, hereditary, senate, Mace.

**Things to think out for yourself**

1. What are the uses of a Second Chamber?
2. How would you reform the House of Lords?

**Game**

Act the Royal Assent by Commission to a number of Bills, the titles of which you can invent.

**Reference books**

For Chapters II-VII the following books may be useful:

*How We are Governed*, Marriott.

*How Britain is Governed*, Rosenberg.

*The Pageant of Parliament*, (2 vols.), Macdonagh.

*Daily Life in Parliament*, H. Snell, M.P. (Introductions to Modern Knowledge, Routledge, 6d.).

*An Introduction to the Procedure of the House of Commons*, C. F. M. Campion.

*The Governments of Europe*, W. B. Munro.

## CHAPTER III

## YOU BECOME A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

What the House of Commons looks like—The Serjeant-at-Arms—Party politics—A General Election—Liberal, Labour, and Conservative—Electoral Reform—The Polling Station—The Secret Ballot—The Constituency—The Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds.

It is not very likely that many readers of this book will ever sit as members of the House of Lords. They may, one day, at a General Election, be called upon to make up their minds as to whether they wish that House to be reformed or not; but apart from this they are not likely to take any special interest in it.

The House of Commons, however, is bound to interest almost everybody to some extent; and it is quite likely that someone who reads these pages may one day sit there as one of its members. We will

imagine that you are that future M.P. and describe what would be called your "political career."

Your interest in the affairs of Parliament, we will suppose, dates from a certain Saturday morning during the years when you are still at school, when you go on an expedition to the Palace of Westminster. After seeing the magnificent old Westminster Hall and standing on the very spot where King Charles was tried three hundred years ago, and after being impressed by the carved roof, gilt decoration and bright red leather seats in the House of Lords, you follow the guide into the more important Chamber—the House of Commons. And you are, without a doubt, a little disappointed. You feel rather as if you had stepped out of a first-class railway carriage into a third-class compartment; for this chamber is like a poor reproduction of the other. There is no gilt, little fine carving, no stained glass. The seats, arranged just as in the House of Lords, are upholstered in dowdy dark-green leather and everything is seen in a dull yellowish light that comes from the glass roof. (As a matter of fact, behind this glass there is quite a handsome carved roof, and the glass which hides it was put up to enable members to hear each other speak more easily.) Also you realize how much smaller this chamber is than the other, and you wonder how all the six hundred and fifteen members manage to squeeze into it.

After you have got over your surprise you notice some important differences between the two Houses. There is no throne here, for the King never enters this Chamber; but at one end there is a large canopied chair, on a raised platform. This is where the Speaker sits and keeps order among the members. Immediately in front of him is the table where the three Clerks sit,



very much like the table in the Lords; but if you walk down the passage-way in front of this and between the rows of seats you will not come to a real "Bar," or wooden fence, as in the other chamber. Instead there is a red mark across the floor. In past days when wrong-doers have been summoned to the "Bar" of the House of Commons a real railing has been put up over this; but it is a long time since that has happened, and nowadays the red line across the floor serves as a boundary, although the railing is still at hand. Members coming in through the swing-doors are not really in the House until they pass over the Bar.

Another difference you notice about this House is that there is a low gallery behind the back rows of seats. This is for the use of those members who have not managed to get a place on the ordinary benches, for if you take the trouble to count the number of members who could sit on these you will find it is not much more than half the whole House.

The guide, no doubt, explains to you what the seating arrangements are. The party that is in power—that is the party that won the last General Election—always sits on the benches to the right of the Speaker, and the very front bench of all is reserved for Cabinet Ministers. It is rather misleadingly called the "Treasury Bench." On the front bench on the other side sit the leaders of the Opposition. Half-way down you notice a break in the rows of benches on either side. This is the "Gangway," and the less important members sit beyond it. Then, behind the Bar and facing the Speaker is the special seat of the "Sergeant-at-Arms," who is a kind of policeman for the House and must drag forth any member who is ordered out by the Speaker and refuses to go of his own accord. But such an event

rarely happens. The Sergeant-at-Arms has his home under the Clock Tower, and above his own apartments are others in which he can keep his prisoner if the House of Commons desires it. The last prisoner to be kept there (fifty years ago) said afterwards that the rooms were quite comfortable, but the chiming of Big Ben just overhead was rather disturbing.

We will now continue with your political career.

We will suppose that from the time of your visit to the House of Commons you take some interest in what goes on there, following the reports in the papers. In the town in which you live most people who are interested in politics are on the side of one of the three chief political parties, and call themselves either Liberal, Labour, or Conservative. Each of these parties is a great society of people with a chief office in London and branch offices all over the country. Each party has a conference every year, lasting some days, and it is then that each decides on its "policy"—which means the things it is going to work for and the ideas it is going to uphold.

The wisest thing you can do is to find out as much as possible about the policy of each party, and then join the local branch of the one you think best. It is true that most people, however, do not take quite so much trouble. Some people follow their parents, others are persuaded by their friends, others again get interested first of all in one particular question such as Drink, or Housing, or Unemployment, and then join whichever party seems to satisfy them most about that one concern. And it must not be forgotten that most people do not belong to any party at all. But we are supposing that you take the wisest course and try to discover what each of the three parties is out for before you even go as far as saying which one you prefer.

Probably it is a general election which bestirs you to do this—the first general election at which you are old enough to vote. Hitherto you have only been interested in politics as an outsider, but now, very soon, if you wish to use the right which has been given to every man or woman of twenty-one and over, you will have to decide for which of three candidates you are going to give your vote. Each candidate belongs to a different party and each, during the week before the election, tries to win you to his or her side. A printed letter comes to you from each one, with the candidate's most flattering portrait at the head of it. The letter tells you various reasons why you should vote for the man or woman of the portrait and why his or her party is the best. On the hoardings everywhere you read more advice as to how you should vote. On the bookstalls you see books and papers written in favour of each of the parties. You go to meetings held by the different candidates and hear speeches urging you to support this, that, or the other party. Canvassers from all three candidates call at your house with the idea of winning you round. It is, indeed, rather bewildering, and if you had given no thought whatever to politics before this you would perhaps feel that each of the candidates and each of the parties would be such benefactors to the country if only they could win the election, that to choose the best would seem an impossible task.

But it would not be wise to choose your party by comparing "election promises," and we will assume that you have noticed how the three parties have been behaving in Parliament before all this excitement came about, that you know something about the policy each decided at its annual conference and that you have discovered what kind of men the leaders are.

It would take a whole book (and an extremely difficult one it would be to write) to explain at length all the differences that you find between the parties, and there is no room to do more than hint at them here.

One of the first things you discover, of course, is that two of the parties are much older than the third. The Liberals and Conservatives, under their old names of Whigs and Tories, go back to the eighteenth century, whereas the Labour Party is only about thirty years old. The fact that there were only two parties in politics until a little while ago explains certain things that seems unsatisfactory to-day. For instance, you saw that the seats in the House of Commons are arranged so that the members are divided into two sides. That was very convenient when there were only two parties, but nowadays it is a little difficult to arrange three parties there without it seeming as if two of the parties are joined together. Many people also think our arrangement of giving each voter one vote is also unsatisfactory now. When there were two candidates each voter supported one or the other. But when there are three candidates the voter may not feel equally opposed to the two he does not vote for, and he may like to say which of them he would prefer, supposing the man or woman whom he really wants is not successful. Sometimes in these "three-cornered" elections the successful candidate does not get so many votes as the other two together. For instance, if out of one thousand voters four hundred vote for one candidate, three hundred and fifty for another, and two hundred and fifty for the third, although the first one wins the seat in Parliament there are really more votes against him than for him. So you can see why some people believe in "electoral



reform," and want to have some different arrangements for voting altogether. But it is very difficult to plan out another method that would be entirely satisfactory.

In still another way were elections simpler in days gone by. Once the different parties stood for quite different and clearly understood policies. For instance, in 1900 every one knew that the Conservatives believed in Tariffs (that is taxes imposed on certain things brought by foreign traders into the country) and that the Liberals believed in exactly the opposite, which was Free Trade. Every one knew also that the Conservatives wanted to keep Ireland united with England under one Parliament and that the Liberals believed in "Home Rule," by which they meant a separate Irish Parliament for Ireland. These were the chief differences between them.

Nowadays we find that each party has gained something that it wanted; for Ireland has Home Rule, but not quite in the way that the Liberals wanted, and the Conservatives have imposed taxes on certain foreign goods, but trade is in such a bad way that the results are not the same as they might have been thirty years ago.

It is very much harder for the looker-on to discover the difference between the policies of the parties nowadays. One of the biggest changes that has happened in the last twenty-five years is that politics is mixed up with a number of things that Parliament never considered before—such things as unemployment, pensions, housing schemes, help for those who are ill or disabled, the League of Nations. All three parties will tell you that they are concerned with these things. They all say they must get rid of unemployment; they all say they believe in pensions for the aged and for



widows, they all say they want to get rid of the slums, they all want to help the sick, they all declare they believe in the League of Nations.

The differences come out in the way they attend to these matters; in whether they are ready to make big changes or whether they are cautious; in the general spirit that you feel in their meetings and conferences.

As has been said just now, we cannot go into details here, but very roughly you will find that the Conservative, as the name suggests, is the most cautious party, and is unwilling to make striking changes. The Conservatives do not believe in taxing the rich people very heavily as they think that will be bad for trade. And you will find that the Labour Party, although it includes many people who have never been wage-earners and some people who are rich, is on the whole chiefly concerned about the working people and is ready to tax the rich in order to have money to help the poor; it is the party that is out for changes. And somewhere between these you will find the Liberal Party, anxious to make some changes, but not so many as the Labour Party, concerned about the poor, but not wishing to come down hardly on the rich.

So finally, having gone very thoroughly into the matter and decided which party has the best plans for the country and the Empire and the world, you go to the polling station on the day of election to give your vote.

Probably a school building has been set aside for the purpose and in one of the rooms you will find two or three men sitting at a table on which is a large black, shiny box. "Your name?" one man asks, and when you tell him he looks down his register of electors to make sure that you are entitled to vote. Unless you are under twenty-one years of age, or have only just

come to live in the neighbourhood, your name should be there. Then he tears a slip of paper out of a book and gives it to you. On it you find printed, one underneath the other, the names of the candidates, with their addresses and occupations. You read on the paper also that you are to put a cross and nothing else against the candidate for whom you vote. You take your paper into a compartment that has been set up in the room (it is rather like a place for writing telegrams in a post office, but more private) and there you put your cross. Then you fold your paper and drop it into a hole in the top of the black box.

Perhaps as you walk away from the polling station you remember what you have heard about the women's suffrage movement that was so prominent before the war, and how some people said that women should never have the vote, since politics was not for them; or you remember what you have read about those days when every voter, instead of dropping his secret paper into a box, had to climb a platform called the hustings and shout the name of the candidate he wished to support for every one to hear. Or you may compare the way we do things in England with what you know of other countries—of France, where there are many different parties and where women do not have a vote, or of Germany where both men and women vote at twenty. You may also wonder whether you have done right in thinking of your party rather than your candidate, and reflect whether after all it might not be best if voters elected the best people, regardless of their parties.

And now we must very briefly outline your political career during the years that follow.

We suppose that from this time onward you take a

great interest in the party to which you have decided to give your allegiance. You join the local branch. You go to meetings and then take part in discussions. One day you are elected a member of the branch committee. Then you find that you have to consider how you can get new members for the party and how you can make the half-hearted ones more enthusiastic. You go, perhaps, to represent your branch at the annual conference; you attend big meetings of the party and hear the leading members speak on the party's policy. You even try to help settle this policy yourself in a small way, by making speeches or by moving resolutions at conferences.

Then one day you are asked if you would be willing to be a prospective candidate. You agree, and we will imagine that you do not have to wait for a general election but that you are sent to some distant corner of England to see whether you can get yourself elected at a by-election, caused by the death of the present M.P. or by his being given a peerage or some office which necessitates his resigning his seat. Members of Parliament are not able to give up their seats by a mere act of resignation. What they often do is to apply for a certain office called the "Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds." There is now neither work nor pay attached to this appointment, but a man cannot hold it and remain an M.P. The duties of the Steward are to keep bands of robbers from the forests on the Chiltern Hills!

So now you are a candidate for this "constituency," as we call the part of the county or town that you are hoping to represent in Parliament. On a certain day you go to the Town Hall and hand in your nomination papers, with the list of those people of the district who wish to propose you. You meet the

other two candidates doing the same thing, and you shake hands and are quite friendly about the tussle that is coming between you. Then you go back to the special office which has been set aside for you for the time being and which is hung with posters telling people to vote for you. In the office you find your agent. He it is who is employed by your party to try to make you victorious. He arranges the meetings at which you are to speak; he gathers together an army of canvassers; he may, perhaps, give advice when you write your letter which is to be printed and circulated to all voters. He will find people with motor cars who will wear your colours on the day of the election and go about giving people lifts to the polling stations. But the money you or your party can spend on the meetings and circulars and offices and on the agent's salary is limited by law. On the other hand the law will punish you if you do not take an election seriously and do not get at least one-eighth of all the votes that are given. Before you began your election campaign you had to hand over one hundred and fifty pounds, and this will go into the National Funds if you fail so badly as not to win this small fraction of the voters to your side. You will then have "forfeited your deposit."

For the next few weeks you will be very busy, visiting every part of your constituency, addressing meetings, and receiving "deputations." These last are groups of people sent by various societies to find out your opinions on the subjects that interest them, as, for instance, temperance, the League of Nations, women's rights.

You can imagine your excitement when the eventful day arrives. Everybody knows you as one of the

three candidates, and you get cheered, or perhaps booed, as you drive in a gaily-decorated car about the constituency, visiting the polling stations and hoping every one will vote for you. At eight or nine o'clock in the evening all the voting is over, and from the different polling stations the black boxes are taken to the Town Hall. You and your two rival candidates have the privilege of watching the counting of the votes. Such piles and piles of little slips! And such hours the counting of them seems to take! . . .

You are not in. Not this time. You knew you had no chance. Your party has not won in this constituency for many years. But you are not depressed, for you have gained many more votes than the last candidate your party put in for the fight. You have increased the number of followers for the party, and your party leader considers it a success and sends you congratulations.

A General Election is coming soon. There has to be one at least every five years. You are to be the candidate again. You keep visiting the constituency in the meantime. You speak at meetings. You show interest in the sports clubs, in the housing conditions, in the local unemployed. The General Election comes round. Once more the posters, the canvassing, the meetings, and finally the counting of votes in the Town Hall.

But this time you win.

We will suppose that not only have you yourself been successful in scoring more votes than either of your two rival candidates, but that your party has secured more seats in the House of Commons than either of the other two parties. You are therefore a member of the governing party, which means that your party leader will be Prime Minister and he will choose the



other Ministers from his followers. The country settles down into ordinary life again with only here and there an old election poster clinging to a hoarding. Your party's ideas and promises are now to be carried out.

#### **Pictures, etc., for your notebook**

Next time there is a parliamentary election collect one or two of the letters and circulars sent out by candidates, and stick them into your book.

Also stick in a portrait of the M.P. who won the last election in the constituency in which you live. (You may find this in the local paper some day.)

#### **Things to find out for yourself**

1. Who won the last election in your constituency and now represents you in Parliament? Find out anything you can about him or her.

2. Are there any by-elections announced in the newspapers? If you find one, discover what has happened to the former M.P. and who are the candidates for his seat?

Find out anything you can about the contest. Perhaps the candidates are taking different sides over one special question; or perhaps they are all promising quite different things.

3. Find out two Conservative ideas, two Liberal ideas, and two Labour ideas, trying to be quite fair, and to make the best of each party.

4. Try to find out any of the proposals for electoral reform.

#### **Clues**

Ask people.

Newspapers.

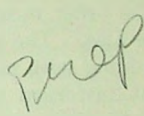
The branch offices or head office of the parties will give you pamphlets.

Look out for information in newspapers, etc., about "Proportional Representation" and the "Alternative vote."

#### **Meaning of words**

Constituency, ballot, franchise, suffrage, prospective candidate, by-election.

Things to look out for yourself

1. What are the advantages of the " Secret Ballot " ?
  2. Are there any disadvantages in our party system ?
  3. What do you think of the way in which an election campaign is carried on ?
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## CHAPTER IV

### YOU HELP ELECT MR. SPEAKER

The inside of the Palace of Westminster—How the members sit in the English Parliament—Foreign Parliaments—"Way for Black Rod"—"Some proper person to be your Speaker"—The Speaker's Levee.

THE day when you first go to the House of Commons as a member you will not easily forget.

We will suppose that you travel by Underground and after getting out of the train at Westminster Station you go along the special subway which brings you right out into the great buildings across the road.

You are in good time and so you can look round a little before going into the Chamber for the election of the Speaker. In what was once the old cloisters of St. Stephen's Chapel (for in the old days the great Palace of Westminster included a chapel for the private use of those who lived there) and is one of the few parts that escaped the great fire of a hundred years ago, you hang up your hat and coat. Most members nowadays sit in the House without hats, which is what you would expect; but until quite lately it was the custom for members to wear top-hats during their meetings. The custom was first broken by one of the first Labour members appearing in his place in an ordinary cap.

Then you go about the long corridors and rooms feeling rather new and nervous, but not so awkward as would be the case if you were the only new member. As there has been a General Election many of the other members you meet are here for the first time also. The passages are quiet and well carpeted and hung with many interesting old pictures, showing great historical events or great men of past times. Out of them swing doors leading you into dining-rooms, writing-rooms, a library, smoking-rooms; and you pass other doors which are the private offices of Cabinet Ministers. You pause in one corridor to look at the News which is being automatically printed on moving strips of paper. You step out on to the Terrace, and walk along with the river on one side and the carved exterior of the House with the royal arms of the Kings and Queens of England on the other. Then you find your way back inside to the round Central Hall where a number of people are clattering over the stone floor. (This is as far as the general public can come when they enter by the usual entrance and pass through St. Stephen's Hall. On their right as they reach the Central Hall is the corridor, or "lobby" as it is called, leading to the House of Lords, and to their left the lobby leading to the House of Commons.) Now you make your way to the Commons, past the policemen who keep the crowd back and past the "Post Office," where you will receive a great batch of all kinds of letters every day—letters from people in your constituency asking your advice about most unexpected matters, letters from others urging you to try and bring about their pet reforms, letters from people who want to be given money, from people who want to lend you money, from shops who want your custom. Not a small part

of your time in this building will be spent in answering them or putting them into a waste-paper basket.

And so you pass through, first, the Outer Lobby, where some members are talking to visitors, then the Members' Lobby where only members may go, and through the swing-doors at the end—and there you are in the House of Commons. But no, you are not considered really in the House yet, not until you have taken a few steps from the door and crossed the red line which marks the Bar. You do this and walk towards the table and between the two rows of benches. If the Speaker was there, in his great chair behind the table, you would have to bow your head slightly before finding your place, but the chair is empty and all you have to do is to find somewhere to sit in the back rows "below the Gangway." You are a "back-bencher" and of no importance yet at all.

You cannot, as perhaps you would like, reserve a special place for yourself for all the time you are in Parliament. The Cabinet Ministers and the more important members of the Opposition have a right to the front benches on each side, but any other member who wants a good seat on any particular day must get there early, put his card on the bench, and make a point of being in his place in time for Prayers. These are read by the Speaker's Chaplain at the beginning of each day's sitting. When the House is crowded you may fail to get a place in the benches at all and have to go into the gallery behind.

There will be no Prayers to-day as the real business of the House does not begin until next week. You sit and watch the members come in. Some come to the seats on your side of the House, others go into the Opposition seats, facing you. Never does any one sit

with a rival party. There are two parties among the Opposition. The larger one sits nearest the Speaker's Chair, and the smaller one below the gangway. Perhaps, as you look up at the galleries which are now rather empty but will be packed to overflowing when the business of the session really begins, you wonder what any foreigner who may be sitting up there must think of this House, which has been called the Mother of Parliaments. Probably he will be surprised at the small size of the Chamber and at its rather dingy appearance. He will think the members must not be very comfortable in those benches. For although they have backs and are well upholstered they seem rather inferior to the separate seats, each supplied with a desk in front and inkpot and pen, that every member of his own Parliament enjoys. If he is a Frenchman or German it will also seem strange to him to find the English Parliament divided into two very clear sides that sit facing each other. In his Parliament the seats are arranged in a semicircle several rows deep and divided here and there by gangways. Each gangway separates one party from another, for in France and Germany, and in most European countries, there are about half a dozen parties instead of the English three. Some of them are not very different from each other, and two or three will join together as one governing party for a time. The most extreme Conservative party sits on the right. Next to them come the moderate Conservatives, and so on until you come to those on the extreme left of the Chair, who will be the Communists, the most revolutionary party. Thus it is that in some countries the different parties are spoken of as the Right, the Left, and the Centre. In passing, it must be remembered that there is



a Communist party in England. It is a party that rather favours the kind of government that Russia now has, and urges that there should be a complete change round, taking away the wealth and the privileges of the rich and arranging everything in favour of the workers. This complete and revolutionary change which the Communists are prepared to bring about by civil war, if necessary, does not appeal, on the whole, to the English people, not even to the workers who are supposed to benefit by it. The Communists therefore remain a very small party in this country and only rarely does one of their number get into Parliament at all.

Suddenly the buzz of conversation ceases. "Way for Black Rod! Way for Black Rod!" someone is shouting outside. Black Rod, you will remember, is the important official who brings all messages from the House of Lords to the House of Commons. He wears ordinary court dress, but he carries in his right hand an ebony staff tipped with gold. This is the sign of his office. But Black Rod is never allowed to walk freely into the House of Commons. Because he is really the King's Messenger, and because in the old days there was a struggle between the King and the Commons for power, the custom grew up to shut the door of the Commons against him and make him knock humbly before he gained admittance. The custom still remains although the struggle is long over and no one now disputes the supreme power and importance of the House of Commons.

So when the cries ring out in the distant corridors the Sergeant-at-Arms leaves his special seat by the Bar and shuts and bolts the door behind him. The three knocks are heard. The Sergeant-at-Arms looks through a little grating and perceives Black Rod. He opens the door and Black Rod comes in and walks

slowly to the table where sit the Clerks in their wigs and gowns. He says: "*The Lords Commissioners desire the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the House of Peers.*" (Sometimes, so that he shall not forget what he has to say, he has the words written on his cuff.) The Chief Clerk, who acts as a kind of makeshift chairman to the House for the time being, leads the way through the lobbies to the House of Lords, passing the Central Hall where some of the general public are watching.

Entering the House of Lords you push and jostle with the rest, trying to get near the Bar and obtain a good view of the three Lords Commissioners who, in their scarlet robes, sit on the bench that has been placed before the thrones.

The Lord Chancellor then informs the members of the House of Commons that His Majesty the King has been pleased to appoint this Commission to act on his behalf and do all that is necessary for the holding of Parliament.

Then he says:

*"My Lords and Gentlemen. We have it in command from His Majesty, to let you know that His Majesty will, as soon as the members of your Houses shall be sworn, declare the causes of his calling this Parliament ; and it being necessary that a Speaker of the House of Commons shall be first chosen, it is His Majesty's pleasure that you, gentlemen of the House of Commons, repair to the place where you are to sit and there proceed to the choice of some proper person to be your Speaker, and that you present such person whom you shall so choose here to-morrow at twelve o'clock for His Majesty's royal approbation."*

If you have listened carefully while these words,

used at the beginning of every new Parliament, are spoken by the Lord Chancellor you will notice how they keep up the old pretence that it is the King who really rules. The King you are told will "declare the causes of his calling this Parliament." That refers to the King's Speech which will be made in a few days to members of both Houses and will give an outline of the laws which are to be made and the policy that is to be followed in the coming months. But the speech will be made up by the Prime Minister and the laws and policy are the ideas of your own party, which now that it has got into power, by winning a majority of seats in the Commons, has the right of trying to carry these out.

So you and the other members of the Commons tramp back to your own House to "proceed to the choice of some proper person to be your Speaker."

The Speaker is the most honoured person in Parliament and one of the most honoured people in all England. Every one realizes what a tremendously difficult task is his, for seated on that high canopied chair, wearing his hot and heavy wig and his black flowing robe, he must preside over the House of Commons. And what does this really mean? It means that he must know all the rules and customs of parliamentary debate and be ever on the alert to see that they are kept; it means that he must be scrupulously fair and see that both sides of the House get fair play in an argument; it means that he must see that members keep to the subject under discussion and not (as some dearly love to do) go wandering from the point. It means that he must keep up the honour and dignity and great traditions of the House. It means that he must know every one of the six hundred and fifteen members personally and be ready

to advise them and to entertain them at times when the House is not sitting. It means that he must be just and fair to every single member, but for the good of all be ready to command any member to be silent or to withdraw from the House, should he behave improperly.

The Lord Chancellor has almost none of these powers in the Lords, for although he acts as chairman he is only considered a peer on equal terms with the rest. There are not nearly so many rules to break in the Second Chamber, and as there is not the same excitement there is not much danger of a noble Lord behaving with impropriety; but there is every chance for them to wander from the point. Not so long ago there was a member of that House who had one favourite subject—that the railway companies should be compelled to provide compartments labelled "Men Only," and whatever was under discussion he always rose and spoke about this.<sup>1</sup>

Unless the Speaker in the last Parliament has retired of his own accord it is customary for him to be re-elected. The party that is now in power may not be the party to which he belonged in the days before he was given his important position. But that does not matter, for once he has been made Speaker he must forget all his party feelings and, as has already been said, be strictly impartial.

Whether it is a new Speaker to be chosen or the previous one to be re-elected the ceremony is just the same, and in any case there is usually only the one member proposed, so that no voting takes place.

You are back in your seat among the back benches of the governing party. Everybody is quiet and there is an air of expectancy over the House. The Senior

<sup>1</sup> *The Pageant of Parliament*, Macdonagh.



Clerk rises in his place at the table and without saying a word points with his outstretched forefinger at someone on your side of the House. This member then rises in his place and proposes "that Mr. So-and-So do take the Chair of this House as Speaker," describing to the House in very complimentary terms his excellent qualifications. Then he sits down and the Clerk stands again and now points with his forefinger to someone of the opposite side of the House, and that member gets up, seconds the motion that Mr. So-and-So "do take the Chair of this House as Speaker," also making a complimentary speech. Who shall be proposer and seconder has been pre-arranged, so you do not sit nervously wondering whether the Clerk's forefinger will be pointed at you. The honour of taking these parts in the ceremony is usually given to two well-known and respected members of the House, apart from Cabinet Ministers. When he has been thus proposed and highly complimented in most flattering terms the Speaker-elect is unanimously called to the Chair. He stands in his place, thanks the House for this great honour, and promises to do his best. The House then cheers, calling him again to the Chair.

The proposer and seconder now advance from their places, go towards the proposed Speaker and lead him to the Chair. In old days it was the custom for him to make a speech first, explaining his unworthiness for the great honour, and then to struggle with the proposer and seconder as they took him by the hand, as if he were trying to escape from the burden of this great office. This was no doubt a very dramatic way of making every one realize what a great responsibility the office implied, but gradually Speakers have declined to go through this game of modesty.

Standing at the top of the three steps that lead to



his chair the Speaker once again expresses thanks for the high honour the House has been pleased to confer upon him. The House reassures him with subdued and dignified cheers. Never do you hear members of Parliament clap their hands. They only use their voices for applause.

Then the Sergeant-at-Arms leaves his chair by the Bar and solemnly lifts the Mace which all this time has been hidden under the table, and lays it in its proper place at that end of the table farthest from the Speaker, beyond the books and papers that are before the Clerks, where all can see it. The Mace, like the Mace in the House of Lords, is the sign of the power of the House. When the Speaker enters or leaves the House the Sergeant-at-Arms always carries it before him.

The leaders of the three parties then in turn offer their congratulations to the Speaker-elect (for he is not really Speaker until the King approves the choice) and then the Speaker-elect moves "the adjournment of the House," which is the parliamentary way of proposing that they go home.

The next day the members assemble again. They await the entrance of the Speaker-elect. He comes in behind the Sergeant-at-Arms; but there are various signs that he is not yet fully appointed to his office. He does not yet wear the long wig and black gown that is the recognized Speaker's garb, but a short "bob-wig" such as the counsel wears in a law-court, and ordinary court dress with no black gown over it. Moreover, the Sergeant-at-Arms does not carry the Mace in an upright position against his right shoulder, but resting across his left arm as a baby might be carried.

To-day the Speaker sits in the Clerk's chair. Presently cries of "Black Rod!" are heard as before, and again the doors are shut and then opened in response to the

three knocks. Walking up to the table, with many bows to the Speaker-elect on the way, Black Rod gives his message, desiring the attendance of this honourable House in the House of Lords. Then once again the Commons tramp through the lobbies, but this time headed by their chosen leader. "Way for the Speaker-elect," call the ushers. And finally he stands with a number of the Commons behind him at the Bar of the House of Lords. Black Rod stands to his right, and the Sergeant-at-Arms to his left, and his proposer and seconder are just behind. But what has happened to the Mace? The Sergeant-at-Arms is empty-handed. It is not fitting that the sign of the power of the Commons should be flaunted before the House of Lords. The Lords in old days would not have liked it any more than the Commons could have endured to see Black Rod strut into their House without a humble request. So the Sergeant-at-Arms still leaves the Mace with one of his messengers at the doors of the House of Lords.

The Speaker-elect and the Lords Commissioners (who are here again) are now very polite to one another. The Speaker-elect bows. The Lords Commissioners raise their cocked hats in reply. Then the Speaker-elect says:

*"I have to acquaint your Lordships that, in obedience to his royal commands, His Majesty's faithful Commons have, in the exercise of their undoubted right and privilege, proceeded to the choice of a Speaker. Their choice has fallen upon myself, and I therefore present myself at your Lordships' Bar, humbly submitting myself for His Majesty's gracious approbation."*

Then the Lord Chancellor says:

*"Mr. —, we are commanded to assure you that His*

*Majesty is so fully sensible of your zeal for the public service, and your undoubted efficiency to execute all the arduous duties of the position which his faithful Commons have selected you to discharge, that he does most readily approve and confirm your election as Speaker."*

Thereupon Mr. Speaker, for he is now indeed the Speaker, declares that he submits himself to His Majesty's royal will and pleasure and says that if he makes any mistakes in the carrying out of his duties he entreats that he alone will be blamed. He also begs that "the ancient rights and privileges" of the House of Commons may be given. This goes back to the times when the King was still the supreme ruler and the Commons had constantly to be humbly petitioning him for the power to do what they desired.

"<sup>HER</sup> ~~His~~ Majesty" says the Lord Chancellor, "is pleased to grant and confirm their ancient and undoubted rights and privileges in as full and ample a manner as they have ever <sup>HER</sup> ~~been~~ granted or confirmed by himself or by any of ~~His~~ Majesty's royal predecessors."

The Speaker and Commons then return to their own House. The Sergeant-at-Arms recovers his Mace and carries it upright against his shoulder. The bells of St. Margaret's Church are heard across the way. They ring now according to an ancient custom.

The Speaker goes to his private room, but very soon as you sit again in your place in the Commons he reappears, clad now in the long wig and flowing black silk gown. He stands before his chair and explains all that has happened in the House of Lords, as if none of you had just watched and heard it all, and as if it was not the same ceremony that had happened again and again through the centuries.

*"I have to report to the House that, in the House of*

*Peers, His Majesty, by his Royal Commissioners, has been pleased to approve the choice made of myself for the office of your Speaker, and that I have, in your name, and on your behalf, laid claim, by humble petition to His Majesty, to all your ancient rights and privileges, particularly freedom of speech in debate, freedom from arrest, freedom of access to His Majesty whenever occasion may require, and that the most favourable construction may be placed upon all your proceedings. All these His Majesty, by his Commissioners, has been pleased to allow and confirm in as ample a manner as they have ever been granted or confirmed by himself or any of his royal predecessors.*

*"My first duty to the House is to repeat my very respectful acknowledgement and grateful thanks for the great honour which you have conferred upon me in placing me again in the Chair."*

The Speaker has a splendid House in the Palace of Westminster and there holds levees from time to time for members of the House of Commons. One of your duties as Member of Parliament will be to attend one of these. And if you do the conventional thing you will wear court dress—cut-away coat, ruffles, knee-breeches, silk stockings and silver-buckled shoes.

#### QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON CHAPTER IV

##### Pictures for your notebook

Stick in any pictures you can get of the interior of the House of Commons. Also you might find in the newspapers one day a photograph of the present Speaker.

Draw a plan of the House of Commons.

##### Things to find out for yourself

##### Clues

1. How many members has each party in Parliament at the present time? *Whitaker's Almanack.*

2. Who is the Speaker to-day? Whitaker's *Almanack*. Newspapers.
3. How much salary does the Speaker get? How much salary does Black Rod get? How much salary does the Sergeant-at-Arms get? Whitaker's *Almanack*.
4. Who was the Speaker in the days of Charles I? Find out anything you can about him. History books.
5. Why is the Speaker so called when he speaks very little in the House of Commons? Encyclopædia.
6. Who is the present Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod and what is his salary? Whitaker's *Almanack*.

#### Meaning of words

Majority, session, adjournment, levee.

#### Things to think out for yourself

1. Make a list of adjectives that would describe an ideal Speaker.
2. Can you find any value in keeping up old customs that no longer have the importance that they once had?

#### Game

Act the whole ceremony of the election of the Speaker, or merely *Scene iii* of the following:

*Scene i.* The Lords Commissioners summon the Commons through Black Rod.

*Scene ii.* The Lords Commissioners command the Commons to choose a Speaker.

*Scene iii.* The Commons choose their Speaker.

*Scene iv.* The Lords Commissioners summon the Commons again.

*Scene v.* The Lords Commissioners confirm the choice of the Commons.

*Scene vi.* The Speaker reports to the Commons that their choice has been approved.



## CHAPTER V

## YOU HEAR THE KING'S SPEECH

Forming a Government—The Cabinet—Privy Councillors—  
The Seals of Office—The Civil Service—The Oath of  
Allegiance—The King's Speech.

WHO is the most important person in the House of Commons?

After reading the last chapter you will probably say, "the Speaker." And you will be right. But if you had said, "the Prime Minister" you would have also been right. For in quite a different way the Prime Minister is just as important as the Speaker.

All members of the House of Commons must obey the Speaker during the sittings, but the Speaker can only command them to keep the rules and customs of the House; he cannot even suggest what laws they shall make, what matters they shall discuss, what taxes they shall make the country pay. In none of these things must he interfere. The Prime Minister and the other Ministers have the chief power in the making of laws, as we shall see.

Some weeks went by between the day of your victory at the general election and the day when you first entered Parliament. You were no doubt glad of the rest after strenuous electioneering. But the leader of your party was exceedingly busy from the time the newspapers announced that his party had the majority. You will remember, that the King has the right to choose the new Prime Minister, but that, by custom, he asks the leader of the winning party to take this most important office. Every one therefore knew who the Prime Minister was to be some

hours before the papers told us that the King had sent for Mr. ~~Macmillan~~ And when the papers next announced that Mr. ~~Macmillan~~ had been to Buckingham Palace and had seen the King and had been asked "to form a Government," no one was in the least surprised.

What does it mean, "to form a Government"?

If you think a moment you will see that when people say "The Government ought to stop this," or the "Government ought to do that," they usually mean the Cabinet Ministers. Parliament, of course, is the real Government and no law can be made unless a majority of the M.P.s present agree to it. But as it is the Cabinet Ministers who propose nearly all the new laws of any importance and as the other members have usually to give way to them when they want to speak in the House, they are, in a way, *the* Government. It is the custom to let the Prime Minister and his Cabinet have the largest share of the time during which Parliament meets each week. A certain time each day is set aside for any one to ask questions, certain days are set aside for any humble member from the back benches to introduce a Bill or move a resolution and some opportunities for introducing discussions must be given to the Opposition. But all the rest of the time is given up to "the Government," so that they can have every chance of bringing about the good things their party promised the voters at the last election. For, of course, the Ministers do not put forward private schemes and original Bills of their own. As the leaders of their party it is their duty to try to carry out the policy and ideas of their party; and those ideas and that policy have been decided on at the party conference. They are servants as well as leaders, servants to their party, and servants to the King who stands for the whole country. The

word minister is therefore very suitable, for it means "servant."

The Prime Minister's task in choosing his Ministers is very difficult. He not only has to choose from his friends and followers a number of people who will take the lead with him in Parliament, but he has to give each one of these a particular job. One must be the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has to look after the country's money; one must be the Foreign Secretary and keep us on friendly terms with other countries; one must be the Home Secretary and look after the general behaviour of all of us as well as supervise the prisons; one must be Minister of Health, another Minister of Education, and another Lord Chancellor—who you will remember is Chairman of the House of Lords, and must not be confused with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. And there are thirty others, at least.

For the few days after the election the Prime Minister is constantly asking people to come and see him. Any one who receives an invitation knows he is going to be offered "a ministerial appointment." Many may guess which ones they will have; some have, perhaps, asked for certain offices beforehand; some, no doubt, are disappointed in what is offered them; some may refuse the offer. The salaries of the different Ministers are by no means the same, which no doubt makes the whole business still more exciting to those who know they are in the running. Then again about twenty of the Ministers will be chosen for the "Cabinet." This is the Prime Minister's group of special advisers. It meets privately at No. 10 Downing Street, the Prime Minister's house, with no reporters to take down what is said. At these meetings the Government's Bills are planned

and the Ministers decide what they are going to say in Parliament or at big meetings in different parts of the country which they are often called on to address. "The Government intends to do this . . ." you may hear a Cabinet Minister say at one of these meetings, and he goes on to explain what it is that the Government will do. But he could not disclose anything unless the Cabinet were agreed that it should be made public. For it is an unwritten law that Cabinet Ministers stand by each other in everything, and although we suspect they sometimes disagree among themselves in the secrecy of No. 10, they always say "we" or "the Government," as if they were entirely of one mind.

When the Prime Minister has finished making his choice, the Ministers are summoned by the King, and we assume that it is he who makes the appointments.

Perhaps the ~~King~~ is at Windsor Castle now. Then the last set of Ministers, who have had to resign their offices because their party is no longer in power, go by train to Windsor and drive in carriages to the Castle. There they have to take their leave of the "King in Council"—which means that some of the King's Privy Councillors will be keeping him company. Once, long ago, the Privy Council was, as the name suggests, a group of personal advisers to the King. Now to be made a Privy Councillor is an empty honour and only once in a way brings a duty with it. All past and present Cabinet Ministers are Privy Councillors, as well as other distinguished people. When the King dies a meeting of the Privy Council is at once called to pronounce his heir the new Sovereign. If the King is ill and cannot carry on his duties, again a Privy Council may be held to appoint people to take his place for the time being. But these are almost

the only times that all the Councillors are called together. Certain lawyers among the Privy Councillors form the "Judicial Committee," and this is a final court of appeal for the Empire.

The train that takes the late Ministers back to London may pass another one bringing the new Ministers to Windsor. Another line of carriages or cars now climbs the hill to the Castle, and the new Ministers are received by the King. Every one is first made a member of the Privy Council and swears to be "a true and faithful servant unto the King's Majesty." After this he takes another oath in which he promises not to disclose any Cabinet secrets. A third oath to "well and truly serve His Majesty" is then taken by each Minister as he is appointed by the King to his particular office. Some then kiss the King's hand and others receive, as a sign of office, three seals in a little velvet case. The Lord Chancellor, who besides being Chairman of the House of Lords is considered the chief lawyer in the land, receives the Great Seal.

And now the Ministers must go back and get to work, each at his own particular job. On either side of you as you walk down Whitehall from Trafalgar Square are most of their offices — the War Office (which looks after the Army), the Admiralty (which looks after the Navy), the Ministry of Labour, the Colonial Office, the Board of Education, and the Board of Trade. But although a general election may bring a new Minister to be head of a government department, the rest of the workers in the department remain as before. Therefore, when, the day after their visit to the King, the Home Secretary goes to the Home Office, the Minister of Health to the Ministry of Health, the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Treasury, and every one of the others to his own



department, each one is received by a Permanent Secretary who really knows more about the work of the department than the Minister himself is ever likely to know. In fact the Minister has to learn quite a lot from this Permanent Secretary. But he does not usually have to set about this task alone, for in many cases the Minister has either been given a helper or substitute known as an Under-Secretary, or else a kind of "fag" called a Parliamentary Secretary.

A Government Department is like a machine for seeing that certain laws are properly carried out. A new Minister and Under-Secretary come along and presently give it some more laws to carry out. For instance, the Ministry of Labour, among other things, looks after all the Labour Exchanges and tells them exactly how they are to give unemployment pay and how much they are to give. Then, perhaps, a new Government comes along and decides at a Cabinet meeting that a new law must be made to alter the amount of pay the unemployed can receive. The Minister of Labour is told that on a certain day he must introduce a Bill before Parliament and by a long and carefully prepared speech try to persuade the House of Commons to pass it. In order to make a good speech he may want a lot of information—for instance, he must know exactly how many people are unemployed and how much is being paid out to them altogether. This he gets from the workers in his department who collect all such necessary facts. Then if the Bill is passed and becomes law, the permanent staff in the Ministry of Labour have to send printed letters to all the superintendents of Labour Exchanges explaining it and telling them how to carry it out. The workers in all these different departments, by the way, are what we call the Civil Service.

But it is now time to return to the House of Commons and find out what you are doing. Immediately after the elected Speaker has been approved by the King the business of swearing in begins. Every member must take the oath of allegiance unless he has religious objections, in which case he makes what is called an "affirmation."

For this occasion you find two tables have been brought in and stand before the Table of the House, where the Clerk and his two assistants sit. But the two assistant clerks have left their usual place. One stands at each of these new tables where copies of the New Testament and some large cards are lying. Members are called up in groups of five. When your turn comes you therefore go up with four others. The Clerk gives each of you a card and tells you to hold it in your left hand. On it you find printed the words of the oath. There are two Testaments between the five of you, and while you read the oath aloud you must have your right hand on one of them. This is what you read, putting in your name: "I, — — —, *swear by Almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King George, his heirs and successors, according to law. So help me, God.*" And then you kiss the book.

Before you go back to your place you must sign the "Test Roll," which is a large book bound in strong leather with brass clasps and opening at the bottom instead of at the sides. There is a new book for each Parliament.

It takes two or three days for all members to be sworn in and for all to sign the Test Roll, so that about a week will have gone by from the time you first entered the Palace of Westminster as an M.P. to the day when you go to hear the King's Speech.

This is the real opening of Parliament. Everything that has gone before has been by way of preparation. To-day the work of the new session really begins.

As you make your way through the crowds who are thronging the streets and pressing close to the doors to get a glimpse of His Majesty when he shall presently come in state, a curious ceremony is being performed in the vaults and passages underneath the House. A search-party, consisting of certain officials, two police inspectors, and twelve Yeomen of the Guard in their picturesque Tudor uniforms, descends into the cellars under the Palace of Westminster to make sure no modern Guy Fawkes is going to try to blow up the King and Parliament. This ceremony has gone on for more than two hundred years, and although the cellars are now brilliantly illuminated with electric light, the search-party still carry their lanterns as of old and they probe with the utmost care into every nook and cranny, among gas pipes, hot-water pipes, and electrical apparatus. When the search is over, a telegram to say that all is well is sent to the King, and the search-party are served with wine and cake. With a "Hip, hip, hurrah!" they drink His Majesty's health.

But there is a scene of excitement throughout the Palace of Westminster as the time for the King's arrival approaches. We will suppose that, instead of remaining in the Commons, waiting for the summons of Black Rod, you have secured a place in the Strangers' Gallery of the House of Lords. This has been reserved for members of the Commons to-day, and from here you will get a splendid view of all that happens.

The members of the Upper House are arriving, but not in their usual everyday dress. They wear scarlet robes, trimmed with ermine or white fur, and the

gorgeous decorations which are the signs of the various orders that have been conferred on them. Their wives, the peeresses, are arriving, too, and in most expensive dresses and glittering with jewels they fill up the back benches. The two Thrones are uncovered and in readiness. Close by them, in a special enclosure are a group of foreign Ambassadors in their national uniforms. As you sit, waiting, you think of the magnificent procession which is now on its way from Buckingham Palace to Westminster. In the old painted State Coach the King and Queen, in gorgeous robes, are driving through the streets amid the cheers of their subjects. The coach proceeds very slowly, and surrounding it walk the Yeomen of the Guard in the uniforms that were the same in the days of Queen Elizabeth. Life-Guards on prancing horses go before and after, and Foot-Guards line the route, playing national songs on their trumpets.

Presently you hear a distant muffled roar. This means that the King has arrived. A message has been signalled to Hyde Park, where the Royal Horse Artillery fire forty-one guns in salute.

The doors to the right of the Throne are opened. In the ante-room the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms, in scarlet and gold, with plumed helmets, stand in line. Then all the lights in the House of Lords are turned on, peers and peeresses rise in their seats, every one looks towards the door, for the royal procession is about to enter. First come heralds in their magnificent dress on which the royal arms are embroidered in crimson and gold. They bow to the empty Throne before taking their places at the side. Then come various gentlemen-in-waiting, ladies-in-waiting, and members of the Royal Household, all in court dress. They, too, bow to the Throne. Various

noble personages follow, including the Lord Chancellor, who wears his long wig, his scarlet and ermine robes, and carries the Great Seal in a richly embroidered satchel. Among these also are three peers, each of whom carries a symbol of the King's supposed power and authority. The first carries the Sword of State, a great weapon enclosed in a crimson-velvet scabbard; he grasps the pommel with both hands and holds it aloft before him. The second peer carries the Imperial Crown on a crimson cushion, and the third the Cap of Maintenance, a quaint old head-dress of velvet and ermine; it is borne on the top of a short white staff.

Finally come the King and Queen, the right hand of the Queen in the left hand of the King. Their heads are crowned. They wear long flowing robes of crimson velvet, edged with gold lace and ermine. Young pages of honour hold their trains.

They stand before the Throne and bow to it together. Then, still hand in hand, they ascend the three steps. The Queen takes her seat and kisses the hand of the King as she parts with it. The King then sits on her right.

"Pray be seated," says the King, and all the peers and peeresses sit down.

The Lord Great Chamberlain then, on the King's behalf, orders Black Rod to summon the Commons to "attend His Majesty immediately in the House of Peers." Black Rod bows low at the foot of the throne, and makes his way to the doors at the opposite end of the Chamber, and so to the House of Commons, while ushers cry, "Way for Black Rod!" Presently there is the sound of many feet, and at the Bar of the House, under the gallery where you sit, a crowd of the Commons are assembled with the Speaker, his Chaplain, and the Sergeant-at-Arms at their head.



The Speaker must bow reverently three times to their Majesties.

The Lord Chancellor then comes to the King's right hand, and kneeling on one knee on the top step of the platform, hands his Sovereign a printed paper.

This is the King's Speech, or, as it is otherwise called, the "Speech from the Throne." It contains an account of the business for which this Parliament has been summoned, and you will remember that we speak of it as if it was still, as in the old days, composed by the King himself. The real author is the Prime Minister, but he will have consulted his colleagues at a Cabinet Meeting. The King, however, has agreed that it shall be his Speech, and at a meeting with his Ministers he signed it with his own hand. Should he be ill and unable to deliver it himself, the Lord Chancellor, who then reads it, assures us it is in "His Majesty's own words."

The silence is intense while the King now stands and reads this printed copy, beginning with the usual opening words, "My Lords and Members of the House of Commons." Every one listens to hear in the words that follow what is going to be the chief business of the new Parliament. If the Government are to carry out some important agreement of the League of Nations, it will be referred to here; if they are going to bring in a Bill to help the unemployed, it must be mentioned here; if they have a new pensions scheme for the sick or the aged, it must be hinted at here. All that the Cabinet hope to do is foreshadowed in the King's Speech.

A few hours later everybody will be reading it in the papers and many will be criticizing it because some things they looked for have been left out.

In the meantime, after an interval for lunch, you

make your way back to the Commons. The House considers first of all some formal business by way of showing that they are not obliged to consider the King's desires immediately (a very old custom). Then the speech is read again by the Speaker and the governing party applaud their leader's programme with loud cheers.

A member of this party now rises and moves "*That a humble Address be presented to His Majesty, as followeth : Most Gracious Sovereign,—We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland assembled, beg leave to thank Your Majesty for the most gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.*"

This is seconded by another member, who like the first wears either some uniform or court dress. Both also carry swords; these are privileges never allowed to members on any other occasion. We shall see in the next chapter that there is a long debate before this Address is passed; for the Opposition are naturally not satisfied with the King's Speech. After it has been accepted by a majority it is sent to the King.

At a later sitting the Comptroller of the King's Household will suddenly appear and interrupt business. In his black and gold uniform and carrying his white wand he will stand at the Bar. The Speaker will stand while this Royal Messenger brings His Majesty's most grateful thanks for the address from his faithful Commons. The Comptroller of the Household will then advance to the Table and hand his document to the Clerk, who will pass it to the Speaker. The Speaker will read the message aloud, and the Royal Messenger will retire backwards with bows until he is back at the Bar of the House, when he will turn round and disappear through the doors.

## QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON CHAPTER V

## Pictures for your notebook

Stick in any pictures you can get of Whitehall, No. 10 Downing Street, and any of the Government Offices.

## Things to find out for yourself

1. Make a list of the most important Ministries and of the people who hold these positions at present.

2. What salaries do these people get?

3. Are any Cabinet meetings being held at present?

Is there any announcement as to what the Cabinet is discussing?

4. Make a list of the main things in the King's Speech last year.

5. What are the names of the chief parties in U.S.A., France, Germany, or any other country you like to choose?

6. How many women members of Parliament are there at present, and who are they?

7. Are there any women Ministers?]

## Clues

Whitaker's *Almanack*. Newspapers.

Whitaker's *Almanack*.

Newspapers.

Whitaker's *Almanack*. Hansard.

Newspapers.

Ask people.

Ask people.

## Meaning of words

Politician, colleague, official, permanent.

## Things to think out for yourself

1. Imagine yourself President of the Board of Education, Minister of Health, Minister of Labour, or any other Head of a Government Department. What kind of policy would you wish to carry out?

2. Make up an imaginary King's Speech.

3. Make a list of the qualities that you think are most necessary in a Prime Minister.

## A Game

Act the Opening of a new Parliament.

## CHAPTER VI

## YOU VOTE IN A DIVISION

Outside duties of an M.P.—The party Whips—The Sittings of the House—Private Business—Questions—Motion for the Adjournment—The Orders for the Day—Debate on the Address—The Amendment—The Division—Unopposed Business—Who goes home?

THIS chapter will give an account of your ordinary daily work as a Member of Parliament.

No doubt, like many of your fellow-members you have other work to do besides your new duty of sharing in the government of this country. Many M.P.s are members also of County or Town Councils, or hold positions in business firms or trade unions, or are lawyers, or are secretaries to important societies—in fact, every one of them is bound to have some outside work, although it may not be regular or paid. In your case we will imagine that you are on various committees in your constituency (including the committee of your local party and the committee of a Sports Club); but that you have been fortunate in being able to give up your regular occupation—whatever that was—for the time you are in Parliament. You can therefore devote yourself wholeheartedly to the duties of an M.P. and do not, like some others, have to spend your mornings in an office, and rush off to the House of Commons in the afternoon. However, this may mean that you have only the M.P.'s salary of four hundred pounds a year on which to live. That may sound a great deal, but you will find your expenses so much increased that it very soon ebbs away. For instance, there is the postage of your immense correspondence. Then you may be expected

to be generous in your constituency. You will be one of the first persons that every determined lady collecting for some charity will approach, and so your name will head the list of nearly every fund that is started in the neighbourhood. Moreover, your constituency may be a very long way from London and a long way from your home, and you will nevertheless be expected to pay it frequent visits in order to keep yourself in touch with those whose votes have sent you to Parliament, to hear their grievances, and to speak at their meetings. You have a free pass on the railway for these journeys, but there are still the expenses of an hotel (unless you are somebody's guest) and of entertaining your more important supporters at lunch and dinner, quite apart from the innumerable subscriptions mentioned above.

Nor are your expenses confined to your constituency. Perhaps your home is out of London and you have to find accommodation not far from Westminster from Monday to Friday. Then you may find it necessary to buy or hire court dress, and every week you will be appealed to by all manner of societies, charities, and individuals in the country at large, and you may find it your duty to subscribe to many of them. Also you may have a home and perhaps a family to support.

You have been told that you are expected, as a member of the governing party, to be as regular as possible in your daily attendances at the House of Commons. Every morning you receive by post a type-written notice mentioning the important things that are going to be discussed that day. At the bottom it says: "Please keep in attendance"; or "Divisions are expected, and members are urged to be in constant attendance throughout the sitting";



or "The Division will be of the utmost importance and a maximum vote is absolutely essential." Each line makes the notice more important.

The notice and the M.P. who sent it to you are each called "a Whip." In other words one of the party "Whips" sends you a "whip" each morning. The business of the members who go by this name is to see that no one in the party is slack in his attendance and especially to see that, as far as possible, all are present to vote when a Division takes place. There is a Whip to look after perhaps every thirty members, and two Chief Whips for each party. The Chief Whips of the governing party are given sinecure offices from which they can draw salaries.

Although the House does not meet until a quarter to three in the afternoon, on some days you may be expected to go at eleven o'clock in the morning in order to take your place on a Standing Committee. This will be explained later. On other mornings you may want to go to one of the Ministries round about Whitehall to get information; or you may want to study quietly by yourself the Bills that are soon to be debated as well as a great many questions about trade, unemployment, education, money matters, relations with other countries, the League of Nations, housing, the care of the poor, the sick, and the aged—about which every M.P. ought to think deeply. Then there will be your daily correspondence to be answered. Some of this awaits you each day in the Post Office in Parliament, and very often you will arrive some time before the House meets in order to deal with it. As each sitting of the House (except Fridays) goes on until half-past eleven, and occasionally later, you must either write your letters now or come out of the debate

to attend to them. Also you will every now and again find a deputation from your constituency or from some society, anxious to extract a promise from you that you will use your influence on their behalf.

As we have seen, the House meets each afternoon at a quarter to three, except on Fridays, when the sitting begins at eleven in the morning and finishes at four in the afternoon. This last arrangement you will find a great convenience as it will enable you to spend an occasional week-end in your constituency.

The Speaker always goes to the House in a kind of procession. First come the messengers (men in evening dress and wearing gilt chains, on which are the royal arms and gilt figures of Mercury), then the Sergeant-at-Arms, carrying the Mace, then the Speaker, his train-bearer and his Chaplain, and then the Speaker's secretary. While it passes, the policemen who guard its route through the Members' Lobby stand at attention. When this is over someone comes into all the writing-rooms and smoking-rooms, saying "Mr. Speaker in the Chair." Then if you are not already in the House you will probably make your way there at once, remembering to bow to Mr. Speaker after you have passed the Bar and before you turn into one of the back benches. In your hand you bring a collection of papers called the "Orders for the Day." It is the programme of things to be discussed.

But before any of the things printed here come before the House what is known as Private Business is considered.

First of all any member who wishes to bring forward a petition now rises and says something like this:

*"I beg to present a petition from eighteen thousand unemployed workers in —, praying that this Honourable*

*House will use all its efforts to revive the woollen trade. And your petitioners will ever pray."*

"*Will the honourable member bring it to the Table?*" says the Speaker, and the member takes his petition and drops it into a big black bag hanging at the back of the Speaker's Chair. A Committee will afterwards consider it.

Then "Private Bills" are rapidly passed. These are Bills giving power to railway companies to run omnibuses, to Town Councils to run trams, and so on. They are not usually very interesting except to the people who will benefit by them.

Next comes Question Time, which is very often the most lively part of a sitting. It lasts usually for about an hour.

Many Ministers are in their places in the front bench ready to reply to the awkward questions that have been sent to them from any other members of the House. If the Minister cannot reply himself, either because he is a member of the House of Lords (as a few of the Ministers usually are) or because important business keeps him elsewhere, his Under-Secretary will reply for him. The second bench from the front is always reserved for the Under-Secretaries.

On your Order paper are a list of all the questions that must be answered to-day. They have been sent to the Ministers concerned a few days before. A great many of them ask for "statistics" (for example, How many new houses have been built? How much money has been spent on finding work for the unemployed?): these the Minister will have got from the permanent officials in his department. Some of the questions will have been answered in writing, not being of general interest.

The questions are numbered and printed on the

"Orders for the Day," and there is a flutter of these papers along the benches when Question Time begins and the Speaker calls in turn on the various questioners. As his name is called the member rises in his place and says: "*I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs question No. 7,*" or "*I beg to ask the Prime Minister question No. 6.*" The Minister then replies, and then the questioner, or any other member, can ask a "supplementary question" so long as it is on the same subject.

What is the reason for this setting aside of a valuable hour each day for bombarding the various Ministers with questions? Perhaps a few examples of questions that have recently appeared in "Orders for the Day" will help you to give the explanation.

## QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT

*(Quoted from Hansard)*

*Mr. Day* asked the Postmaster-General whether he has any statistics that will show the number of portable wireless receiving sets in use in Great Britain; and will he give particulars?

*The Assistant Postmaster-General* (Viscount Wolmer).

No, Sir. No such statistics are available.

*Mr. Day.* Is there any way in which the Post Office can tell whether licences have been taken out for these sets?

*Viscount Wolmer.* Yes, Sir; we have a number of ways, but I am not prepared to tell the Hon. Gentleman.

*Mr. Day.* Can the Noble Lord tell me whether any prosecutions of portable wireless set holders have taken place for not having a licence?

*Viscount Wolmer.* Oh, yes, Sir.

12 March, 1929.

*Mr. Remer* asked the Home Secretary whether his attention has been called to the large number of road accidents in which motor cyclists have been involved; and whether he has drawn, or proposes to draw, the attention of the police throughout the country to this aspect of the traffic problem?

*The Home Secretary* (Mr. Clynes): I am aware of the large number of road accidents in which motor cyclists have been involved, but I do not think it is necessary to draw the attention of the police specially to the matter. What seems chiefly to be required is a higher standard of skill in driving and an increased sense of responsibility on the part of motor cyclists, and that is to be obtained, I am sure, as much by education and propaganda by those in a position to influence motor cycling opinion as by any action on the part of the police.

25 July, 1929.

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*Mr. Mander* asked the Prime Minister whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce legislation during the present Parliament to end or mend the House of Lords.

*The Prime Minister.* We have not considered the question.

*Mr. Mander.* Will the Prime Minister consider removing this picturesque relic to the British Museum?

*Hon. Members.* Withdraw!

*Mr. Speaker.* Hon. Members must not make disrespectful remarks about the other place.

24 July, 1929.

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Questions are asked with the idea of making Parliament think about a certain matter, and also sometimes with the idea of making the general public think



about this same matter, since the reporters in the Press Gallery will pass on to all of us a good deal that happens in the Commons. They are also often intended to stir up the Government to take action.

There are usually a great number of members ready to jump up and ask supplementary questions, and the Speaker has to decide whether these are really to the point or whether the Minister need not answer them. The Minister's replies are often vague and evasive and sometimes members get angry with him, and the Speaker has to shout "Order! Order!" The poor Minister is often in an awkward position, for he cannot give away Cabinet secrets, and yet he must try and make a good show of it.

After Questions, is the time for introducing a new member who has been successful at a by-election. He appears at the Bar with an old member on either side of him and he is escorted by them to the Table where he takes the Oath of Allegiance.

Then comes the main business of the day's sitting, unless someone backed by forty other members moves the "adjournment of the House." By this he means that the ordinary business shall be postponed to another day in order that the House shall discuss here and now some urgent question. If there was danger of war, or if there was some trouble in one of the British Colonies, or if the Government seemed to have made some outstanding mistake, then we should expect someone to make this proposal. But if his proposal or "motion" (as proposals in Parliament are called) was carried, the matter for discussion would not come up until half-past eight and in the meantime the House would go on with the next business.

The Speaker now says: "The Clerk will now proceed to read the Orders of the Day," whereupon the Clerk

gets up at the Table and reads the name of the first Bill that is down for consideration.

But during the first week after the King's Speech no Bills are down on "Orders for the Day," for there is a long debate lasting from day to day on the general policy of the Government as it is outlined in that speech. This is called the Debate on the Address.

Members of the Opposition find fault with it; they want more information about some of the new Bills that the Speech has promised, they want to know why various things which they consider necessary have not been mentioned. A great many people, in fact, have a great deal to say on what is to be the work of the House for the next few months. Finally an "Amendment" to the Address to His Majesty is proposed by one of the Opposition. An Amendment is something that is meant to be added to the Address in order to improve it. The Opposition want to add to the humble Address mentioned in the last chapter something like this:

*"But humbly represent to Your Majesty that the failure of Your Majesty's Ministers to make any plain declaration of their policy in regard to . . . creates a condition of uncertainty," etc.*

Finally at nearly eleven o'clock on perhaps the sixth night of the debate, the House votes as to whether the Amendment shall be added or not. This is the first vote the new House of Commons has taken, and there is a feeling of excitement. If the amendment is carried it means that the Government is defeated and that Parliament do not want the programme that was put before them in the Speech. In that case the Prime Minister and the other Ministers would have to resign, and the King ask the Leader of the Opposition to form

a new Government. But as there has just been a General Election and as the governing party has, of course, the largest number of M.P.s, no one seriously expects that the amendment will be carried. Even if, as has happened more than once lately, the two parties in the Opposition can muster more M.P.s between them than the governing party, the smaller Opposition party is probably going to back the Government in most things.

The Speaker puts the question which is to be voted on: "*That those words be there added.*" "*As many as are of that opinion,*" says Mr. Speaker, "*will say 'Aye.'*"

"*Aye,*" calls every one on the Government benches.

"*The contrary 'No,'*" says Mr. Speaker.

"*No,*" shout the Opposition.

"*I think the Noes have it,*" says Mr. Speaker.

"*The Ayes have it,*" roar the Opposition.

Every vote is taken in this curious way first. On some matters, on which there is little or no disagreement, it is very easy for the Speaker to decide whether the "Ayes" or "Noes" are in the majority. But he must always have a division if at least fifteen members will stand to show they desire it.

"Clear the Lobby," he says now, and at the moment electric bells ring throughout the whole building to summons members to vote. "Division! Division!" shout the policemen, who are scattered about the various corridors. For two minutes the ringing and shouting continues, while members come hurrying from the dining-rooms, the smoke-rooms and the writing-rooms.

When the two minutes have passed the Speaker puts the question again, and the *Ayes* and *Noes* reply as before.

"*I think the Noes have it,*" he says.

"*The Ayes have it*," cry the Opposition.

"*'Ayes' to the right and 'Noes' to the left*," says the Speaker; and he then names two people on each side of the House to act as tellers and count the votes. The two Chief Whips on each side always have this privilege.

As the members are all about to pour out of the House into the Division Lobbies, perhaps someone near you wants to ask the Speaker a question. Now the rule is that whenever a member addresses the Speaker he must stand up bareheaded—*except* during a Division. Then, in order to draw attention to himself while others are standing and moving in the direction of the Lobbies, he must sit and wear a hat. This member near you is in a predicament, for like so many M.P.s nowadays, he has left his hat in the cloakroom. The only thing he can do is to borrow someone else's. He begs for yours, which you happen to have with you. He puts it on, and as it does not fit, his comical appearance attracts, not only the Speaker's attention, but every one else's. Amid a roar of laughter he manages to get the answer to his question.

The Division Lobbies are corridors running along each side of the House; the entrance for the *Ayes* is a door behind the Speaker's Chair, and the *Noes* go through a door at the opposite end.

As you walk down the noisy Lobby amid the excitement, jostling your fellows, you find two clerks sitting at a desk and to one of these you give your name, so that next day the way you voted can be published for any one to see. In fact it will probably be in the newspapers. At the end of the Lobby stand the tellers counting the numbers.

After about ten minutes the division is over and

members are back in their seats or waiting behind the Bar to hear the result. The tellers go up to the table and tell one of the Clerks their numbers. The Clerk writes the figures on a piece of paper and hands it to the teller of the side who has won. The members anxiously watching now know which side has won, and there are cheers from that side.

Now the tellers stand in a row before the Speaker. They bow to him, and the chief teller on the winning side reads out the numbers in a loud voice: "Ayes to the right two hundred and twenty; Noes to the left, three hundred and forty."

The governing side roar out their cheers while Mr. Speaker shouts "Order! Order!"

It is now eleven o'clock, and for the last half-hour of the sitting the House only deals with "unopposed business," that is business over which everybody agrees, such as appointing certain members to a committee.

The excitement of the evening ended with the Division, and the benches have been emptying ever since. At half-past eleven all is over. The remaining members follow the Speaker out of the Chamber. Through the House, according to an old custom, the doorkeepers and policemen call out "Who goes home?" Once, long before the days of electric light, of taxis, buses, trams, and underground trains, an M.P. walking back to his house in the middle of the night was likely to be attacked by robbers. The doorkeepers therefore used to arrange for those members who lived in the same part of London to collect together, and the cry "Who goes home?" was a signal that the parties were being made up and were about to set off into the dark streets of Westminster with little boys carrying flickering torches to light the way.



## QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON CHAPTER VI

## Pictures for your notebook

Cut out from the newspapers and stick into your book any photos you can get of Members of Parliament who have recently asked questions in the House. Underneath write what these questions were.

## Things to find out for yourself

## Clues

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. Who are the Chief Whips for the different parties in Parliament at present?         | Whitaker's<br><i>Almanack</i> . |
| 2. What "sinecure" offices are the Chief Whips on the governing side given at present? | Whitaker's<br><i>Almanack</i> . |
| 3. Collect a few interesting questions asked in the House of Commons.                  | Newspapers.<br>Hansard.         |

## Meaning of words

Sinecure, amendment, unopposed, evasive.

## Things to think out for yourself

1. What do you think were the reasons for asking the questions you have collected in connection with suggestion 3 above.
2. Invent some suitable questions that might be asked in the House of Commons.
3. Invent a petition.
4. What are the disadvantages of voting in a Division if you have not listened to all the previous Debate.

## A Game

Act Question Time in the House of Commons.

## CHAPTER VII

## YOU HELP MAKE LAWS AND LEVY TAXES

The Passing of a Government Bill—A Maiden Speech—A Private Member's Bill—The National Debt—The Sinking Fund—The Estimates—Committee of Supply—The Committee of Ways and Means—The Budget—Taxes—The Finance Bill—The Prorogation of Parliament.

No doubt when you first became an M.P. you enjoyed the thought that you were going to share in the making of new laws for the country. During the general election you had made a great many speeches, promising that your party would bring in certain Bills if only they were in power. The party *is* now in power; and in the King's Speech many of these promises have been repeated. The time has now come for making the promises true.

One by one some of the promised Bills begin to appear in "Orders for the Day"; but as you get accustomed to the ways of Parliament you find the passing of a Bill (which of course, is another way of saying, the making of a law) is such a long and tedious business that your first excitement begins to die down long before the Act is on the Statute Book. Also you may find that so many Amendments to the Bill are passed that when it has received its last alteration it is so changed that you are rather disappointed.

We will suppose that you are especially interested in a Bill that is to raise the age at which children may leave school, and we shall describe how it becomes law.

Every member knows some days beforehand what business is going to come before the House. Every Thursday, the Leader of the Opposition, in Question Time, asks the Prime Minister what will be taken the

following week, and on Saturday you can get a weekly programme called the Order Book. Besides this, your "whip" arriving by post each morning reminds you of the most important items for each day.

You know, therefore, before you see the announcement on your "Orders for the Day" on what day this particular Bill will be presented. The ceremony takes place after Question Time. First of all the President of the Board of Education rises in his place in the Treasury Bench and asks the leave of the House to introduce his Bill. The Speaker puts the Question to the House and a chorus of "Ayes" declare the House's approval. The Minister then rises again with a piece of paper in his hand and walks to the Bar.

"*The President of the Board of Education,*" says the Speaker.

"*A Bill, Sir,*" says the Minister.

The Speaker then requests the Minister to bring the Bill up; whereupon he comes forward and places the piece of paper on the Table. The paper is a dummy Bill, with merely the title written at the top. This the Clerk reads aloud, and the Bill has now been received by the House.

Someone then moves that the Bill "*be now read the first time,*" and usually there is a chorus of assent.<sup>1</sup>

This is the first stage in the passing of the Bill and the simplest one. It will not be heard of any more for some days; but in the meantime copies will be printed for all members to read and study. Before it

<sup>1</sup> The first stage of a Bill varies in form, so that it would not necessarily be introduced in this way. It should also be noted that the question of the raising of the school-leaving age is complicated by difficulties relating to non-provided schools, and maintenance grants, which are not entered on here. Moreover, since this chapter was written before the latest Education Bill was introduced into Parliament, the account given here must not be taken as historical.

becomes law it must go through three "Readings" in both Houses and finally receive the King's assent.

The day on which the "Orders for the Day" include "Education Bill: Second Reading" is the most important day of all for the fate of the Bill. The President of the Board of Education, when the moment comes, rises in his seat and moves "that the Bill be now read a Second Time." He then makes a long speech pointing out what an excellent thing it will be for the country if the plans contained in his Bill are passed. Someone else on the same side of the House seconds him with another long speech. Then the Opposition begin to pull the Bill to pieces. They try to prove that it would be dangerous to put it on the Statute Book; that neither the children nor the parents want the school-leaving age raised; that it would cost too much money; and that although the Minister may have the best intentions, this is the most carelessly planned, impossible, stupid Bill that was ever drawn up by a Cabinet and introduced by a Minister. Finally one of the leading Opposition members moves an Amendment that the Bill should be read in six months time instead of "now." This is understood to be a polite way of proposing that the Bill should be dropped altogether.

The Second Reading may go on for more than one day and a great many people will make speeches. No doubt a great many others will interrupt by calling out remarks or by cheering and have to be called to order by the Speaker. Perhaps you yourself wish to make a speech in support of the Bill. In that case you must see one of the Party Whips and ask him if he can arrange it. It is said that any one who wants to speak in the House of Commons has merely "to catch the Speaker's eye," and so get the Speaker to call on him.

Actually, however, for all important debates the Whips give the Speaker a list of such members as wish to say something. As this is to be your maiden speech no doubt the Whip will try to fit you in; and then on the eventful evening you wait nervously for your turn.

Even the most confident and able speakers confess to feeling a little nervous the first time they address the House. Later on, when you are well known, your speeches may be treated with disrespect and honourable members may either call out impolite interruptions or not even bother to listen to you. But to-day every one present listens with most polite interest as you begin in some such humble fashion as this: *"Speaking as I do in this House for the first time, let me assure honourable members that I will not claim the attention of the House for a very long period, particularly as I am, I think, one of the younger members, and therefore my experience cannot rival that of other speakers on this motion."*

(These words are quoted from a maiden speech made a little while ago.)

As you proceed with your speech you are not only trying to make an impression on the House of Commons, but you are thinking of the general public who may read your speech to-morrow in the newspapers. Up in the Press Gallery, reporters are busy following you with their shorthand notes. Especially you are thinking of the people far away in your constituency who do not know much about the ways of Parliament and will perhaps value one clever speech more highly than your patient, daily attendance at the House in order to back up your party by voting, or the hours you spend each week hammering out difficulties in a committee.

We will therefore hope that your maiden speech is



a good one and that not only does some of it get reproduced in the Press, but that the congratulations of older members who speak after you are also reported.

At last members weary of the debate and the Minister moves "that the Question be now put," which means that he proposes that the vote shall be taken as to whether or not "the Bill shall now be read a Second Time." If the Speaker agrees there follows exactly the same thing as happened at the end of the debate on the Address.

*"I think the 'Ayes' have it,"* says the Speaker; giving the governing side the benefit of the doubt.

*"The 'Noes' have it,"* roars the Opposition.

*"Clear the Lobbies,"* then says the Speaker. And the division follows.

Ten minutes later you learn that the Bill has passed its Second Reading.

It now has to go through the Committee stage, which means that it must be examined clause by clause, in its every detail, either by a committee of about fifty members upstairs in a Committee Room, or that it must come before a Committee of the whole House.

A duty of yours which we have only mentioned and not yet explained is attending one of the Standing Committees that meet at eleven o'clock in the mornings and go on till lunch time. There are six of these committees and most members have to be on one of them. They meet in special rooms which are arranged in the same way as the House downstairs, and their business is to examine Bills after their Second Readings. Very important Bills, however, cannot be dealt with like this, but one day after the Second Reading the whole House must turn itself into a Committee to examine them. This simply means that the Speaker leaves the Chair, that a member who has been elected

Chairman presides instead, sitting in the chair of the Chief Clerk, and there is much more freedom to speak than at ordinary times. The Committee stage of our imaginary Bill is likely to be a very long one and rather tiring. The Opposition, having failed to prove that the Bill in a general way is no good, now attack it clause by clause. They bring in amendment after amendment, and each one has to be voted on. Finally, the Bill has been gone through from beginning to end and is ready for a Third Reading. But before this takes place the Chairman of the Committee must report to the Speaker and the House that "they have gone through the Bill and have made amendments." This, which is known as the Report Stage, is always gone through whether the Bill has been before a Standing Committee or before a Committee of the whole House.

And now comes the Third Reading. The Minister moves "that the Bill be now read a third time." A debate, like that on the Second Reading follows, but it is not so exciting, for it is not at all likely that, having got so far, the Bill will not pass this stage. Amendments can still be proposed and the Opposition may again try to postpone the Third Reading to "this day three months," or they may try and introduce important alterations. Also, to your great annoyance, they may just talk for the sake of passing away the time. Finally, however, there is a Division. The motion for the Third Reading is carried. The Bill has now passed the Commons and must go through exactly the same stages in the House of Lords. The Lords, no doubt, will have some amendments to suggest, and these the Commons will have later on to consider and either agree to accept or not. When the two Houses cannot come to an agreement over a Bill, or its Amendments, the Bill is left for a time;

but as we have seen it can be brought up again later on and passed, despite the Lords.

The last stage in the making of an Act is the giving of the Royal assent. That, as we know, is nowadays never refused, and it is always announced with the quaint ceremony described at the end of Chapter II.

It may be that you are not content to support the Government Bills, (also called Public Bills), but that you wish to bring in a Bill of your own one day. This is what is called a Private Member's Bill (not to be confused with Private Bills). It may be about any cause you have at heart—a Bill to abolish capital punishment, a Bill to forbid the shooting of certain wild birds, a Bill to compel cyclists to have rear lamps. You can imagine it what you like.

There are so many Private Members (that is M.P.s without any special office or position) who wish to bring in Bills that it is customary to ballot (that is, draw lots), for a share of the time that is set aside for this purpose every Friday. If you are lucky in the ballot you must be ready to introduce your Bill at the appointed time. If there is a long debate on the Private Member's Bill that precedes yours, four o'clock may arrive and the House will adjourn without your getting in your Bill at all. Even if you should succeed in getting it through the First Reading you may never get a chance of seeing it further. It will probably depend on whether the people on your front bench are interested in it; for unless the Government will see that you get in your Second and Third Reading you may have to be content with the knowledge that your Bill has been printed at the public expense for any one to read and admire. On the whole the Government, with so many Public Bills to get through all the necessary stages, are inclined to

take time from the Private Members rather than to give them extra opportunities.

One of the chief difficulties that the House of Commons feels to-day is finding time to deal with all its business. It was the custom in former days for Parliament to meet regularly from February until about June. This was called the Parliamentary Session. There would then be a few months' holiday before the Prime Minister drew up a new King's Speech for the opening of a new session in the next February. Nowadays, when Parliament is anxious to make laws about things that it hardly thought about a hundred years ago—housing schemes, pensions, unemployment, education—it seems only able to spare time for a few weeks' holiday in August and the usual short "recess" at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun.

But it is not only law-making that takes up a great part of Parliament's time. There is also the most important business of deciding how much money is wanted to pay the country's expenses and how the money or revenue is to be got. The expenses which Parliament has to meet are very great. There is first of all the National Debt, which amounts to more than seven thousand million pounds. This vast sum has been borrowed from different people and different countries in order to pay for various wars during the last two hundred and fifty years. The Great War, which is far and away the most expensive thing that has ever happened to the world, increased our National Debt from six hundred million to seven thousand millions. To pay off this debt every single person, grown-up or child, in Great Britain would have to pay one hundred and forty-five pounds. This shows how almost impossible it is to get rid of it. The best we can do is to put so much aside every year to reduce it.

The money thus put by is called the Sinking Fund. But of course as long as the Debt remains there is the interest to pay on it, and that amounts at present to about three hundred million pounds per year. This Interest and the Sinking Fund are our first expenses.

Then there are the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force, which cost altogether about one hundred and twenty-five millions a year, and then the Civil Service. This last you will remember includes all those Government Departments which are mostly to be found round about Whitehall. You can imagine what an enormous sum it takes to pay for the upkeep of all those offices, for all the printing and stationery, and to pay all those who receive salaries, from the Ministers to the office boys. Also it must be remembered that some of these Ministers have to give large sums of money to Town and County Councils all over the country. The Ministry of Health pays out money to help build "Council" houses; the Board of Education helps to pay for every public elementary and secondary school in the country.

Then again there are large sums to be handed over to the King so that he can live as we feel a King should, with a Palace for his home and with a large body of servants to wait on him and with plenty of money to give away. The various sums set aside for the Royal Household are called the Civil List.

No doubt you can think of other national expenses for yourself.

In the autumn of every year the various Government Departments begin to work out how much money they will want for the next year. This "financial" year opens on 1 April—a most important day. They begin in good time as there is much to be done before the money is given them. First of all each department



sends its "Estimates" to the Treasury. This is a Government Department like the rest, and you will find it has the right to examine all the Estimates before they go before Parliament. Its head, of course, is the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Then, about February, all these Estimates come before Parliament, one day a week, perhaps, being set aside for them. But on these occasions the House of Commons calls itself a Committee of Supply and a Chairman presides just as in every other Committee of the Whole House. The proceedings are not very exciting unless the Opposition feel very dissatisfied with the work of one department. Suppose, for instance, the Education Estimates are being discussed and that the Opposition feel that too much money is being asked for the schools. They object to the estimates and perhaps propose that the salary of President of the Board of Education shall be reduced by one hundred pounds. This is just a way of expressing their displeasure with that Minister. He of course tries to persuade honourable members that the Estimates are quite fair and that the money asked for is really necessary. Then members ask him a great many questions about the numbers of new schools and the cost of building them, and so on. Some of these he cannot answer, not even by looking into the pile of papers in the green dispatch box by his side. But on this occasion seats near the Speaker's chair have been reserved for some of his permanent officials from the Board of Education, and he can go up to them and get the information he requires.

Finally all the Estimates have been settled and then comes one of the most exciting days that any Member of Parliament can experience. This is the day when the Chancellor of the Exchequer reveals his Budget—

that is, his plan for getting all the money that is wanted to meet all the Estimates.

On that day you will do your best to get a place on the benches, or, failing that, you will take up the best position you can in the gallery behind. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has kept his Budget a dead secret, although he has been thinking it out for weeks beforehand. Only the Cabinet share his dark plans. Rumours of course have got abroad as they always will, and the newspapers have been busy telling us what new taxes to expect. Finally Private Business and Questions are over and the crowded benches and crowded galleries listen in tense silence as the Chancellor rises to make his Budget Speech. He begins by explaining to us the condition of the country's pocket—whether we overspent last year or whether we have a little in hand; and then gradually he reveals what taxes he proposes the people of the country should be called upon to pay. Some of them will be the same as before, some will be quite new, some will be increased, some will be abolished. Everybody listens very anxiously to know what the Income Tax is to be. This is a regular tax which every one whose income exceeds a fixed amount must pay. Above that level so much in every pound is due to the Government and will be demanded by the local tax collector. Special allowances are made, however, to people who have families or others dependent on them. Perhaps last year the tax was four shillings and sixpence in the pound. Will it now be five shillings? Is there any hope of it being reduced to four shillings? Sixpence more or less in the pound makes a considerable difference to nearly everybody. The very rich are also anxious to hear about the Super-tax, which is an extra income tax for very large incomes; and the

poorer people dread to know that there is to be another kind of tax on tea or sugar, making these daily necessities more expensive to buy.

Taxes are of two kinds—direct and indirect. A direct tax is one that is paid straight from the taxpayer to the person or post office that collects it—such as income tax, dog licence, wireless licence, and the stamps that have to be fixed on certain legal documents. An indirect tax is one that is put on some article such as tea or sugar or tobacco. The merchant pays the tax on every ton or hundredweight of the article and then he passes the tax on to the wholesale dealer, who passes it on to the shopkeeper, who passes it on to you. Therefore if you go to a shop and buy a packet of cigarettes for sixpence, part of that sixpence (it is difficult to say exactly how much) is a tax that will go into the Nation's pocket. Some indirect taxes are on foreign articles only, such as the present tax on foreign motor cars. These are known as Tariffs or Customs duties. Others, like the tax on beer, are levied on British and foreign manufacturer alike.

It often takes some hours for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to explain his Budget, and then he moves several resolutions, each one proposing that certain of his taxes shall be levied. If these were not passed, it would be a case of the "Defeat of the Government."

But although the taxes come into force the next morning, all the resolutions that were passed the previous night must be put into the form of a Bill, known always as the Finance Bill. This has to go through all the usual stages of a Bill, except that the Lords are not allowed to amend it or delay its passing. Even so it may be many weeks before it becomes law.

And now the summer has come and the House of Commons is hot and stuffy. You have sat through

many tedious sittings, you have been in daily attendance in readiness for a Division, and like every one else you look forward to a holiday. But there is still so much business to do that the Prime Minister explains in answer to a Question that the House must reassemble after a few weeks' holiday. And so with very little rest you may continue to be a Member of Parliament for five years—which is as long as any Parliament is allowed to last. After that time there must be another General Election.

But the General Election may come along before. One day the Government may fail to win the Division on one of their Bills, or the Opposition may bring in a Vote of Censure on the Government and persuade the House to pass it.

What happens then?

"CABINET RESIGNS. DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT," say the newspaper posters.

Once more there is a visit from Black Rod, summoning the Commons to the House of Lords. There sit the five Commissioners in their red and ermine robes, the Lord Chancellor in the middle. The Chief Clerk of the Lords reads to you the commission by which the King approves these gentlemen acting for him. The Lord Chancellor then reads a speech from the King, congratulating Parliament on all the splendid new laws it has made and thanking the Commons for granting supplies of money. No mention is made of their discharge.

The Commons return to their chamber.

The Speaker walks towards his empty chair and bows to it. Then he informs the Commons of all that has passed in the House of Lords and reads the King's Speech of congratulations and thanks. He also makes no mention of the dissolution. He merely shakes

hand with the members near him and disappears. The Mace has already gone. The members begin to depart—perhaps for the last time.

"Who goes home? Who goes home?" call the doorkeepers and policemen through the corridors.

#### QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON CHAPTER VII

##### Pictures for your notebook

Find any pictures you can of Ministers who have recently introduced Bills in Parliament. Stick them into your book and write their names and the names of their Bills underneath. Also try to get a picture of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. Draw or stick in pictures of any of the articles on which he has put an indirect tax. Try to illustrate his direct taxes also.

##### Things to find out for yourself

1. What important Government Bills are being considered by Parliament at the present time or have lately been considered?

2. Find out any interesting Bills that have been introduced by private members.

3. What new taxes were introduced in the last Budget? Were any old Taxes removed?

##### Clues

Newspapers.  
Hansard.

Newspapers.  
Hansard.

Whitaker's  
*Almanack*.

##### Meaning of words

Revenue, Exchequer, estimate, statute.

##### Things to think out for yourself

1. What advantages are there in having so many stages in the passing of a Bill?

2. Invent an imaginary Bill.

3. Which do you think would be of more advantage to the Government—a tax on diamonds, or a tax on tea?

##### A game

1. Act a scene in Parliament when the Second Reading of a Bill is taken.

2. Act Budget night in the House of Commons.



## CHAPTER VIII

## YOU GO ON AN EMPIRE TOUR

The Irish Free State and Northern Ireland—British North America—Immigration—The South Seas—Natives—Maoris and New Zealand—The Australian Commonwealth—China's cold reception—India and "Swaraj"—Indian languages and religions—An Indian election—Egypt, Palestine, and the Sudan—Kenya—The Union of South Africa—The native problem—The negro—Slavery—The natives in British West Africa—Responsibilities of Empire.

WHILE you are a Member of Parliament you may be more concerned with English affairs than with the lives of people overseas; but you cannot forget that you are helping to govern an immense and scattered Empire as well as the little island that is your home. In Question Time you often hear your fellow-members trying to get information about conditions in the Colonies. Laws are sometimes passed to regulate colonial affairs. Commissions are sometimes sent out to find out the state of things in certain parts of the Empire. And every three years there is the Imperial Conference. On these occasions the Prime Ministers of the self-governing Dominions and special representatives of India come to London to talk with the British Prime Minister, and any other Ministers whose duties are connected with what is sometimes called Greater Britain. Parliament naturally takes a great interest in these Conferences and expects to be told all about them.

It is not unusual for a Member of Parliament to feel it his duty to tour the Empire. Many of course find it too expensive and many feel that they ought not to be so long away from the House and their

constituency as would be necessary. We will imagine that in spite of these difficulties you are able to go, and in this chapter we will describe your journey.

It is an exciting moment when you stand on the deck of an Atlantic liner and watch Liverpool glide away from you. It will be many months before you see England again. Your luggage down below indicates what a variety of scenery and climate is before you: fur against the cold, a helmet against the tropical sun, and a great assortment of clothes. Moreover you reflect with satisfaction that you have been inoculated against malaria and typhoid.

The boat calls at a port in Ireland for more passengers. Some men from Dublin who come on board begin talking of a debate in Parliament. You think they refer to the House of Commons that you have recently left at Westminster; but presently you realize they speak of the Dail, which is the Parliament of Southern Ireland. You look back at the retreating shores and realize that you have already passed the youngest child of the Empire. Perhaps "the youngest twins" would be a better expression, for in 1922 when Ireland was separated from England she was given two Parliaments, one for the Irish Free State in the South and one for Northern Ireland.

Now for about a week you see nothing but the Atlantic. On rough days when the huge liner rolls you think of John Cabot, who with eighteen English sailors once crossed these waters in a ship which nowadays would hardly be trusted out of sight of land. That was the beginning of the Empire, for the coast-line of Newfoundland which you presently see on the horizon was first discovered by those men. It is the oldest child of the Empire and now a self-governing Dominion with a Parliament and Cabinet

of its own like Southern and Northern Ireland. You sail past it and past the cliffs of Labrador, which is part of the same Dominion, and past fleets of fishing ships to which we owe our plentiful supplies of cod-liver oil. At last, entering the mouth of the St. Lawrence River, you prepare to disembark at Quebec.

You are now in the largest and leading Dominion of the Empire. But you rub your eyes and wonder if you have come to the United States by mistake. The conversation you hear reminds you of American "talkies"; there are dollars in your pocket, and waffles and iced drinks in all the restaurants. Then you reflect that it is natural that Canada should become somewhat Americanized, for the States are her nearest neighbour and it is easy to pass to and fro over the three thousand miles of frontier which separates the two countries. The frontier is quite undefended on either side.

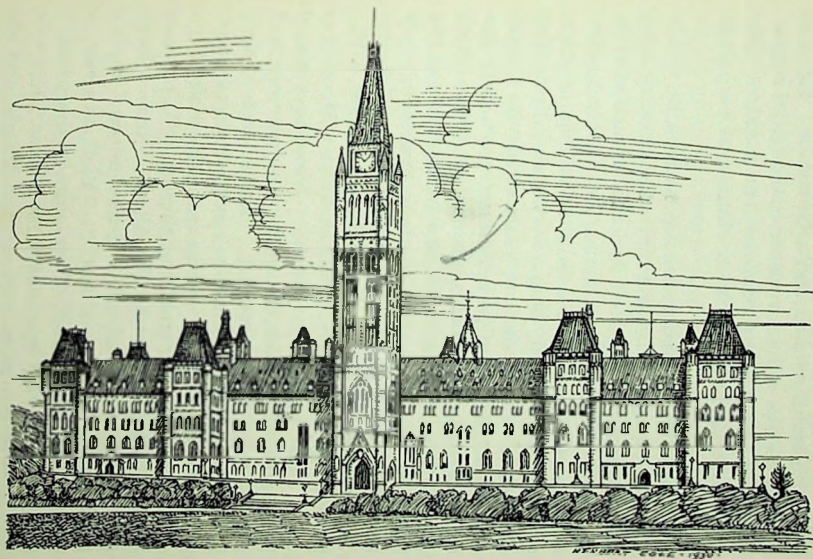
The English geography books all point out that Canada is thirty-one times the size of England, but you only properly realize its size as you travel for days on end by the Canadian Pacific Railway, seeing nothing but miles upon miles of prairie waiting for adventurous cultivators. You mention to a fellow-passenger that you think that here is the place to solve the problem of the English unemployed. He agrees that there is plenty of room in Canada for immigrants, but he points out that they must be the right kind—men and women who are prepared to stand the loneliness and hardship of Canadian agricultural life.

In what we call a long train journey in England—lasting perhaps for the best part of a day—you may pass through eight or nine counties; in crossing Canada you must go through five provinces, into any one of

which England could be packed with plenty of room to spare. There are nine such provinces altogether, and they are more important divisions than English counties, for each one has its own Parliament. Over the whole country is the Federal Parliament (so called because the provinces form a federation, or league, of free states). This meets at Ottawa, in the eastern end of the country where most of the people live. Like the British Parliament, it consists of an Upper and Lower House, but although the Lower House is like a smaller reproduction of our House of Commons (for, large as the country is, the population amounts to not much more than the population of London and its suburbs), the Upper House has no Lords. Its ninety-six members are appointed by the Viceroy on the recommendation of the Canadian Cabinet. The Viceroy, as his name suggests, is the substitute for the ~~King~~ <sup>Queen</sup>. That, at all events, is his present position. Not many years ago he was said to be the representative of the English Government as well, which of course meant that the Canadian Government was under that of the Mother Country. This idea was shattered at the Imperial Conference of 1926 when it was declared that all the *self-governing* dominions were equal with one another and with the Mother Country. Canada was very pleased with this declaration.

Having crossed the prairie and penetrated the Rockies you reach the west coast of Canada and prepare to set sail for New Zealand.

It is a voyage of twenty days over the Pacific Ocean and a much warmer sea trip than your last, for you must now cross the Equator. You make brief calls at some of the famous South Sea Islands. The British possessions here form a "Crown Colony"—that is, a



PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS AT OTTAWA



colony with no self-government. There is no parliament, only a small council and a Governor. He is a governor in fact as well as in name, although of course he is responsible to the Ministers in London. He lives on the island of Fiji, in a climate of perpetual summer.

So far we have not mentioned any natives, by which is meant the original inhabitants of a country. In Canada the natives are Red Indians, a race that is unfortunately dying out. Civilization, it seems, does not suit them. Some of the South Sea Islanders are a fine type, as Robert Louis Stevenson discovered when he went to pass the last years of his life among them, and the Maoris of New Zealand are famous for their courageous and sporting character. These New Zealand natives were said to be cannibals when the English first went to settle in their country. They did not, however, eat men for reasons of hunger but as a means of showing contempt for an enemy. The most insulting remark you could make to a Maori was to say, "Your father was eaten." Nowadays many of the Maoris are educated in the English way and hold high offices in the country. The following story shows how quickly they have taken to civilized ways.

An Englishman lately found himself next to a Maori at an important public gathering. "You may be surprised to hear," said the Maori, "that I have Scottish blood in my veins." "I am indeed," replied the Englishman. "How is that?" "Well, as a matter of fact," said the Maori, "my grandfather had a Scottish Presbyterian missionary for dinner."<sup>1</sup>

The story of the wars between the Maoris and the British invaders reveals the amazing courage and chivalry of the natives. They took no pride in subduing

<sup>1</sup> A. Eden, M.P.: *Places in the Sun*.

a foe who was handicapped by a shortage of provisions. On one occasion, guessing that a supply of food would be not unwelcome to the enemy, they filled a canoe with potatoes and other food stores of their own and paddled it down to the British camp under cover of a white flag.

There is rather an English feeling about New Zealand, and except for the strange trees and flowers you might sometimes believe yourself at home again. Most of the people you meet have relations and friends in England, for New Zealand is a recent addition to the Empire. It is a self-governing Dominion with one Central Parliament. You visit the House of Representatives (as it is called) and are much impressed by the comfortable couch on which each member is seated, with a desk in front of him. There are eighty M.P.s, four of whom are Maoris, and there is usually one Maori in the Cabinet. In place of our House of Lords there is a Legislative Council appointed for seven years by the Governor, who, like the Viceroy in Canada, acts as the King's representative.

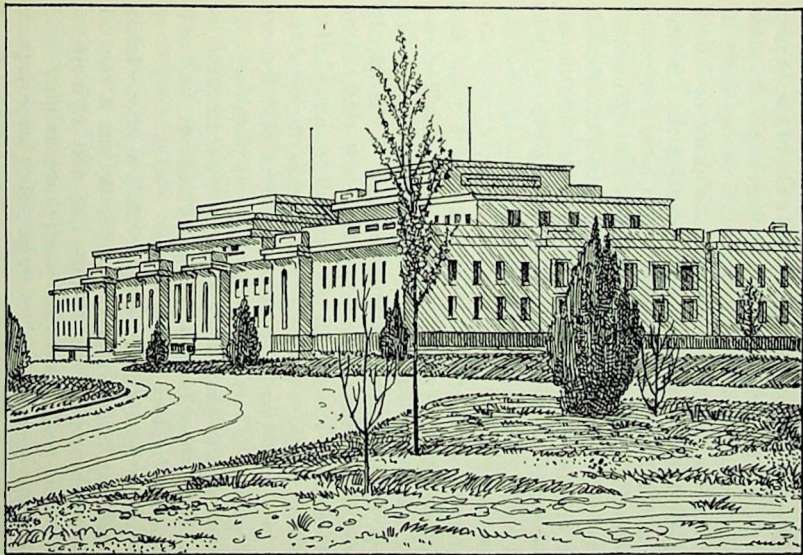
A sea voyage of three days brings you from New Zealand to Australia, the second largest Dominion. Everybody remembers Captain Cook in connection with Australia. He first hoisted the British flag here in 1770, after interrupting some natives who were having their dinner on the seashore. Eighteen years later it was decided to use the new territory as a place to which convicts might be removed, and for fifty years shiploads of English prisoners were emptied into what is now New South Wales. Together with their officers and a few free settlers they formed the beginnings of a new country. Meantime, explorers pushed farther into the interior, and when about one hundred years ago France inquired of England how

much of the continent she claimed as her own, England replied, "The whole."

Like Canada, Australia is divided up into a number of parts, each under its own Parliament. The divisions here are not called provinces but "states," and the whole is known as the "Australian Commonwealth." The Central Parliament meets at Canberra, a city that is still being built and will perhaps soon be reckoned as one of the finest capitals in the world. Its splendid site was decided on by the Australian Government as far back as 1909. The magnificent Parliament House was opened by the Duke of York in 1927.

The Australian House of Commons is called the House of Representatives, and has less than one hundred members. The Upper House, called the Senate, has only thirty-six members, six from each state. But these are elected in the same way as the members of the House of Representatives. This shows the democratic spirit of the Australians. They have gone further than any dominion from our House of Lords. There is, of course, a representative of the Crown. As in New Zealand, he is called the Governor. The political parties in Australia are rather different from those of England. There is a Labour party which stands chiefly for the town workers, a Liberal party which is mostly supported by the wealthy manufacturers, and a Country party to which the farmers belong—for the country is chiefly agricultural, like Canada. The Canadian parties are similar.

And now you set sail for Asia. As you voyage for three thousand miles over the Indian Ocean you are full of expectation, for the most interesting part of the Empire is your next destination. Your time in India will be all too short, so you take the quickest



THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE AT CANBERRA



route, and the British possessions beyond the north-eastern horizon you can only visit in your mind. There lie the Malay States and Singapore, chief of the Straits Settlements, a naval base that is watched with some anxiety by Japan. There, too, lies Hong-Kong, a small British foothold in China. Thinking of Hong-Kong reminds you what a cold reception the Chinese gave to the first European traders. China was proud of her ancient civilization and called the white merchants "barbarians." Hong-Kong came into British hands after the "Opium Wars," which were partly caused by the anxiety of British merchants to trade and China's complaints that they brought opium into the country.

It has been said that in comparison with India the rest of the Empire seems small. This is not because of her size, for in that respect India only comes third among the countries of the Empire. It is partly because of her huge population (there are many more people in India than in all the Dominions and Colonies together), partly because of the great trade we do with her, and chiefly because nowhere else are we faced with such important and difficult problems. If we think of the Empire as a family with England as the mother, than India is her most difficult, but also her most interesting, child.

When the East India Company first went to India they did not find a race of cannibals, but a race of people with ancient traditions like the Chinese, a people who had developed their own culture and civilization. It is natural, therefore, that some of these people should resent British rule, should resent being kept in inferior positions by a foreign race. Some of their demands have already been granted and many positions in the Indian Army and Civil Service that



were formerly reserved for the British are now open to Indians as well. But many educated Indians are now asking that India shall be a self-governing Dominion. They demand "Swaraj" or "Home Rule." The leader of this movement is Gandhi, a man who lives partly the life of a monk and partly the life of a political leader. He preaches "passive resistance" and "non-co-operation." That is, he urges his followers to resist the British without bloodshed, to refuse to pay taxes, to refuse to buy British goods. But the Swaraj movement contains all kinds of people, and some of them, unlike Gandhi, believe in violence. When a crowd of Indians make a commotion and come into conflict with the police or the army it is not always easy to say who fired the first shot.

At the end of the Great War it was decided to make the experiment of giving India what looked like the beginnings of self-government. In every province—India is divided up into a number of large provinces—certain Ministers could be Indians and certain duties were left in their hands; Parliaments were set up for each province and for the whole country, and most of the members were elected. But the Governors in the provinces and the Viceroy at Delhi could always override the decisions of the Parliaments. This arrangement was called Dyarchy or "split rule." It was decided to reconsider it in ten years' time, and at the time of writing a most important commission under Sir John Simon have just come back after a long investigation of India and have given their report. They do not recommend self-government yet.<sup>1</sup>

As you go about the country you will understand some of their reasons.

<sup>1</sup> The presentation of the Simon Report has now been followed by a Round Table Conference at which British and Indian Delegates are met together to discuss the future of India.

To begin with, you realize that the Indians are by no means all alike. The language varies tremendously. You pick up a few native words in one province and find that they are not understood in another. Indeed, if you are to make yourself understood all over India you must know quite as many languages as you would need to speak with all the peoples of Europe. Religion varies also. Most Indians are Hindus, but about one-third of the people are Mohammedans. People of these two different religions often live close together, and, owing to the conflicting beliefs, riots often occur. For instance, Mohammedans at prayer may be disturbed by a Hindu festival, or devout Hindus who regard the cow as sacred may be horrified to find Mohammedans sacrificing this animal on an altar.

Then again, nearly all Hindus are bound by the Caste system which divides them rigidly into classes. Lowest of all are the "untouchables" who must not enter the temples or drink out of wells used by others. There are sixty millions of these unfortunate people, about one-fifth of the whole population.

You have forgotten perhaps that the British only rule two-thirds of the land. The remaining third is under the native princes and maharajahs. Some own only a few acres and others have estates as large as Great Britain.

One day you come across an election. It is very different from England in spite of posters and a few excited people. The constituency is as large as Scotland and consists of widely scattered villages. Most of the people have no vote at all, and of those who do come to the polling station a number cannot read the names on the ballot paper and have to be helped by the election officers. There is far more difference in education among the Indians than among the English. At one end of the scale are the masses

of illiterate peasants and at the other brilliant University professors, lawyers, and business men.

The Future of India is one of the greatest questions of our day.

The Suez Canal now offers you a quick route home, and if you go that way you could stop for a few days in Egypt and perhaps visit Palestine, the new home of the Jews, and the Sudan, a Crown Colony. Egypt was until lately a British Protectorate, and although it is now no part of the Empire we still desire to keep British soldiers and officials there, rather to the displeasure of the Egyptians. Palestine is under British "mandate," which means we look after it on behalf of the League of Nations. Before the Great War it belonged to Turkey.

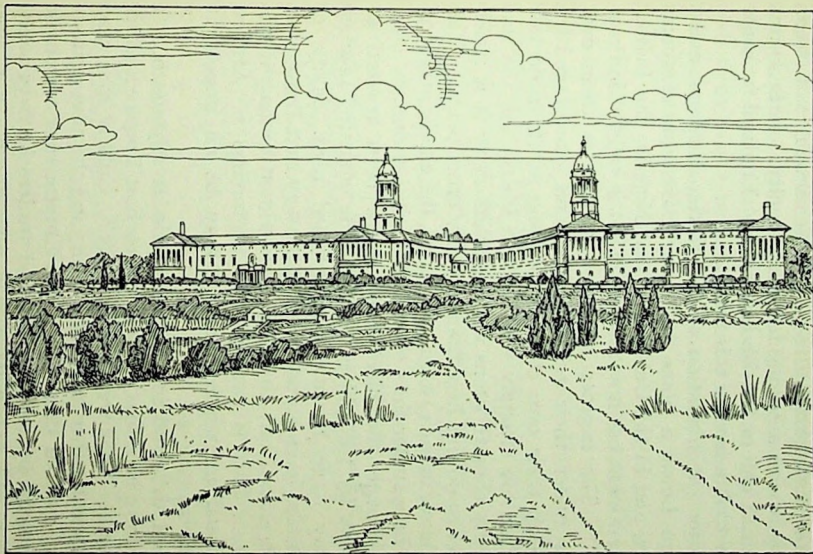
After much consideration you decide that in spite of the advantages of this quick route you will go home by the old-fashioned way of the Cape.

From Bombay you sail to Zanzibar and thence to Durban in the Union of South Africa. You have with some regret passed by Kenya Colony, a place much talked of to-day. A great number of Indians as well as English have migrated there, and the British Government has much ado to look after both these races as well as the native negroes.

A great many of the people in South Africa have Dutch names which reminds you that the Dutch were the first colonists here. By the British victory in the Boer War they were brought into the Empire along with the native Africans of this region. The Union of South Africa is now a self-governing Dominion and there is one Central Government over the five provinces which form the Union. It is rather surprising to find that although the Houses of Parliament (known as the Senate and House of Assembly) meet at Cape Town,

the Government offices are at Pretoria in the Transvaal, a province right in the north. This was an arrangement to please both Dutch and English, for the Dutch lived chiefly in the Transvaal and the English at the Cape. Many of the Dutch, or Boers, have their own political party whom they call Nationalists. The rich English people mostly belong to the South African Party, and the workers in the towns to the Labour Party. But besides the English and Boers, and a number of Indians, there are the several million natives. They have not, on the whole, profited by contact with Western civilization. To the north there are districts where they live alone in their own tribal way, and here they are a fine type, but those in the towns are very inferior. The rich white people employ them as servants, and the poor white people have demanded that they shall not be allowed to work in factories as they take less wages and oust the Europeans. This restriction is called the "Colour Bar." The question before South Africa at the moment is what to do with the great black population. Shall they be allowed to vote? (Some of them already do.) Shall they be made to live apart from the whites? Shall the Colour Bar continue?

As all the people you have talked to in South Africa are so concerned with this native problem, it is natural that while you are sailing home your thoughts should be about the black man. Occasionally you see ships making in to the African coast, bound perhaps for Nigeria or the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone, British possessions in West Africa at which, unfortunately, your ship does not call. They make you think of other ships which for three hundred years made regular voyages to that coast to buy shiploads of slaves from tribal chiefs. The conditions of the blacks who were



THE GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AT PRETORIA



stowed away in return for whisky and firearms are almost unbelievable to-day. We should not treat animals with anything like such cruelty. It is an unpleasant blot on British history that England for some time took a lead in this traffic.

After the liberation of the slaves, England made Sierra Leone a home for many thousands of them. Here, and in the Gold Coast and Nigeria, the British Government has now adopted what is called "indirect rule." The negroes are allowed to live their own lives under their tribal chiefs, and encouraged to develop their own customs, so long as these do not conflict too strongly with British ideas. As the unhealthy climate keeps white settlers away it is much easier to do this here than in many other places. The Governor in each case is, of course, the chief authority, and he is under the Colonial Office in London.

Although the black races have been treated as inferior by the whites, some of the educated negroes to-day have become distinguished men. Many of them also have begun to resent the way that Europeans have shared out the African continent among themselves. This is perhaps the beginnings of African Nationalism, which one day may be an important problem.

You will land in England again at Plymouth. It was from here that some of the earliest Empire makers set sail. What were they out for? Gold at first, and afterwards other forms of wealth; and the adventurous spirit spurred them on. This Empire that was built up chiefly by adventurers and traders in days when natives did not matter, has now become not only England's chief provision store but also a duty and a trust. The following statement on Kenya by the British Government illustrates the new point of view.

*"Primarily, Kenya is an African territory, and His Majesty's Government think it necessary definitely to record their considered opinion that the interests of the African natives must be paramount. . . . In the administration of Kenya, His Majesty's Government regard themselves as exercising a trust on behalf of the African population."*

### QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON CHAPTER VIII

#### Pictures for your notebook

Illustrations of any part of the Empire in which you are chiefly interested.

Stick in a map of the world and mark on it your Empire Tour.

#### Things to find out for yourself

#### Clues

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. Which are the self-governing Dominions?   | Whitaker's<br><i>Almanack.</i> |
| 2. By what names does the Cabinet go in the various Dominions.   | Whitaker's<br><i>Almanack.</i> |
| 3. What is the name of the Upper House in the various Dominions?   | Whitaker's<br><i>Almanack.</i> |
| 4. What is the name of the Lower House in the various Dominions?   | Whitaker's<br><i>Almanack.</i> |
| 5. Find out the name of the Prime Minister in each Dominion.   | Newspapers.                    |
| 6. Find out what party is in power in each Dominion.   | Newspapers.                    |
| 7. What is the Indian Congress?  | Whitaker's<br><i>Almanack.</i> |
| 8. Find out the latest news about India.   | Newspapers.                    |
| 9. What other recent items of imperial news can you discover?  | Newspapers.                    |
| 10. Select any part of the Empire that interests you. Find out how it was first acquired, how it is now governed, what trade we do with it, and what the natives are like. |                                |

#### Meaning of words

Imperialism, mandate, "economic questions," legislature, executive council, paramount.

**Things to think out for yourself**

1. Write a diary of part of your Empire Tour, describing incidents and impressions.
2. Choose any part of the Empire and say what you think are our responsibilities and difficulties there.
3. Do you recommend that we should imitate Canada and Australia and have local parliaments in England? Give the advantages and disadvantages of such an arrangement.

**A Game**

For Empire Day, or other special occasions, make up a little play in which the children of the Mother Country come together and speak of their hopes, ambitions, or difficulties.

**Books of reference for the teacher**

Books on the different countries in the Empire are too numerous to be mentioned, and a number are available in any public library. H. M. Stationery Office also provides a number of interesting and inexpensive publications, of which the report of the Simon Commission is the most notable. Also to be recommended are the volumes in the "Outward Bound Library," edited by Ashley Gibson and published by J. M. Dent and Sons.

## CHAPTER IX

### AT THE TOWN HALL

The Town Hall—The Council Chamber—Aldermen and Mayor  
—The Town Clerk—The Education Officer—The Agenda  
—Committees and sub-committees—A Council Meeting—  
Women councillors—Municipal elections—Rates—Water  
and other departments—The authority of Parliament—  
The Municipal Civil Service.

MAY I introduce you to Councillor Keen, who is kindly giving up some of his valuable time to explain certain interesting things in this Town Hall and in Yourborough?

*Councillor Keen.* Good evening. I am very pleased

indeed to show you round. I hope this time was convenient for you? I suggested 5.30, as that is the time at which our Council meets, and I wanted you to see them in session, as we say. We have to hold our meetings in the evening as most councillors, like myself, are occupied during the day. I hope I shan't tire you.

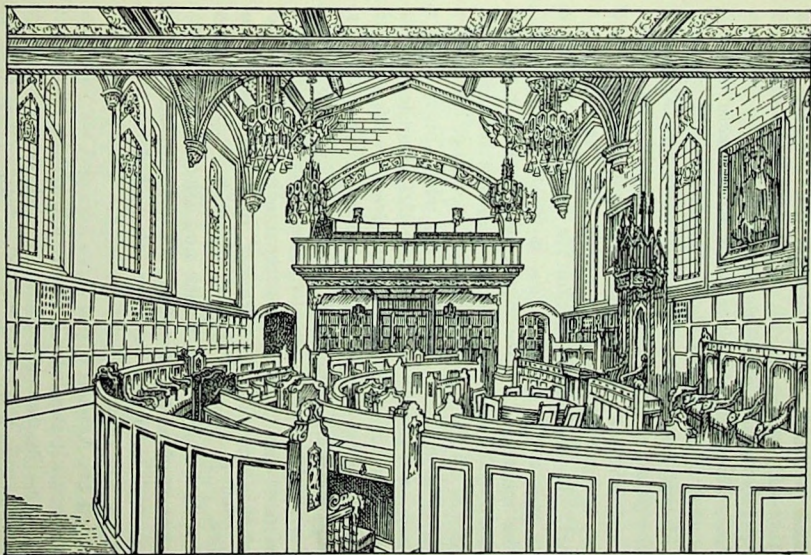
Now, first of all, I want you to accompany me up the main staircase. We won't stop, at present, to notice all these doors and corridors, nor to wonder what the different people in the building are doing.

Now, this door I am going to open will lead us straight into the gallery of the Council Chamber. I have reserved seats for you in the front row, and when you look down into the great hall below you will see the Town Council. All meetings are open to the public, and you will find a few other people in the gallery; but not nearly so many as I should like to see. Personally, I don't think our townspeople take nearly enough interest in their own affairs. You will notice that the councillors are all comfortably seated in a roughly semicircular formation. The aldermen, who are merely especially honoured councillors, sit apart in raised seats facing the rest, and in the middle of them is the Mayor, who will be wearing his robes and chain of office. He is chairman of the Council, and in some respects the chief man in the town. The Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors, together are sometimes known as the "Corporation." Just below the Mayor you will see a gentleman in lawyer's wig and gown. That is the Town Clerk. He is the most important person employed by the Council, and you will notice he often advises the Mayor, especially on legal points. The Education Officer may also be there to-day as an educational matter is under discussion. Like the

Town Clerk, he is not a member of the Council, but one of its most valued servants. You may also notice a number of men writing at a table. They are newspaper reporters who take down all that happens. To-morrow you can read a brief account of the meeting in the local papers.

Now I am going to hand you each a copy of the "Agenda" or programme of the meeting. As you see, it is an extremely fat programme—very much fatter than the "Orders for the Day" that every Member of Parliament receives. But then a Council works quite differently from Parliament. Our full Council meetings are only held once a month, and during the rest of the time the Council split up into a number of committees. It is important to remember that committees and sub-committees are meeting in this building every day of the week. Every councillor serves on some of these committees, and it is there that he does his chief work. You see, if little details about repairing drains or adding new books to the Town Library had to be discussed by the full Council meeting we should have to give up our whole lives to the work. As things are, we have a Highways Committee to look after the drains and a Library Committee to look after the Public Library. Some committees parcel out their work further among sub-committees. The Education Committee, for instance, has a sub-committee to look after the elementary schools and another to look after the secondary schools. Oh, by the way, most committees can have a few "co-opted members"—that is, it can invite a few useful people who are not councillors to join the Committee. I wonder if you noticed a clergyman coming out of the Town Hall as we went in? He is a co-opted member of the Education Committee, and





INTERIOR OF A COUNCIL CHAMBER

very useful too. Thus, you see, he can help the Council without going through the business of an election—for of course all councillors are elected. I will explain about elections presently.

Now, when the various committees have decided what they want to do about the drains, the schools, the library, the parks, the baby welfare centres, and all the other matters which you will find come under the authority of the Borough Council (borough, you know, is another name for town), they each make a report. In fact each committee makes a report of every meeting it holds. This is called the "Minutes of the meeting." Then when the Council meets on the second Wednesday in the month it considers the reports of all the committees that have met during the previous four weeks. In fact, the whole business of a Council is to approve or disapprove of the decisions of the committees. No important piece of work such as building a new school or making a new park can be undertaken until the Council has "passed" the suggestion.

Now look at your agenda paper and you will see it consists of one long report after another. "Report of Finance Committee," "Report of Education Committee," "Report of Watch Committee"—that committee looks after the Police and Fire Brigade. We will not read all the headings as it would take a long time, and it would take us the whole evening to read all the reports right through. Every councillor received his Agenda a few days ago and we will hope he has read it carefully. For it will not be read aloud now. The Mayor will mention each report and will say "Paragraph 1, 2, 3," and so on. (You will see that all the paragraphs are numbered.) Then, when he comes to a paragraph that any councillor wants to object to, that councillor gets up and speaks.

Now if I have guessed aright, the Council will by now be considering the Report of the Education Committee. I believe one of my fellow-councillors is going to raise a question on Paragraph 3, which you will see contains a proposal of the Education Committee to build a new secondary school for boys in Kitchener Road. Let us go in for a few minutes and listen. We must not talk once we are in the gallery. This way. Mind the step.

*The Mayor.* Report of the Education Committee, page 11 of the Agenda. Paragraph 1, 2, 3.

*A Councillor.* I should like to say a few words on paragraph 3, Mr. Mayor. I understand that there is a strong body of opinion in the neighbourhood of Kitchener Lane in favour of building a school for girls also. The feeling is that there are as many girls in need of secondary education as there are boys. As things are at present the nearest secondary school for either boys or girls is nearly two miles away, and the tram service does not extend as far as this outlying suburb. Now if it is unsatisfactory for boys to have to walk nearly two miles to and from school in bad weather, it is equally, if not more, unsatisfactory for girls. I have taken some trouble to get at the facts of the case, and I find that the number of girls of secondary school age living in this area actually exceeds, in a small degree, the number of boys. I should, therefore, like to move, your worship, that the case be referred back to the committee for further consideration.

*Another Councillor.* I hope, your worship, this Council will not misunderstand the action of my committee in this case. We should not like to be thought guilty of a prejudice against the education of girls. Indeed, my committee hope to be able to propose the building of a girls' school very soon. Our reason for postponing the matter was a financial one. We did not feel justified in asking the Council to double the expense. We are told on all hands that our rates are too high.

*A Lady Councillor.* I strongly support the proposal that the matter be referred back.

*The Mayor.* Will those in favour kindly signify in the usual

way? (*There is a show of hands.*) The matter is referred back to the Education Committee for further consideration.

Paragraph 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 . . . 8.

I am sorry to usher you out so soon, but there are so many other things that I want you to see. I hope you understood what was happening. The councillor who spoke on the side of the proposal to build a boy's school was the Chairman of the Education Committee and therefore would be their chief spokesman in the Council meeting. You noticed a lady councillor spoke. I expect you saw that there were not many women among the councillors. Personally, I think it is a pity that more women do not take up this work. Every one agrees that their opinion is most useful on matters of health, and a Town Council is perhaps more concerned with health than anything else. Many women, of course, cannot spare themselves from their homes, but there are plenty of others who have time on their hands and might well spend it in the cause of their town. They would have to get elected, needless to say. We have our municipal elections every three years. The town is divided into a number of "wards" or divisions, and there are so many places on the council for each ward. For instance, the ward in which I live can return four members, and there were six candidates at the last election. I expect you remember it. It was in November. Now before we go any farther, are there any questions that you would like to ask?

*You.* Are there any political parties in municipal elections?

*Councillor Keen.* Yes, but they are not quite the same as those that you meet at Parliamentary elections. They call themselves Municipal Reformers, Progressives, and Labour, and they more or less



correspond to the Conservatives, Liberals, and Labour party in Parliament; but of course, the things they disagree about are different from the bones of contention at Westminster. What you chiefly notice is that the Municipal Reformers are anxious to economize in order to keep down the rates, and the Labour party fairly ready to spend money on new enterprises. That is natural, because the Municipal Reformers are mostly people who own property, and the more property you hold the more rates you pay, and the more expenses the Council has, the higher the rates. The Labour party, on the other hand, stands for the poorer people, and when the Council spends money on new parks, or schools, or hospitals, it is they who chiefly benefit. Not that they escape the increased rates altogether, for their landlords may demand higher rents in consequence.

*You.* Are the councillors paid?

*Councillor Keen.* No. None of us are paid except the Mayor, who has a special allowance to help him with the heavy expenses attached to his office. You see he is expected to give dinners and an annual Ball and so on. Some people think we ought to be paid. Of course it is true that being a councillor takes up most of your spare time. I am on four main committees and three sub-committees, which means I have to be here nearly every night of the week. On the other hand, I enjoy it very much. Personally, I think we want people on the Council whose only motive is to improve the town. We don't want to encourage half-hearted people by paying them salaries. We have all our meetings in the evenings so as not to interfere with the councillors' ordinary occupations. All the *officials*, the Town Clerk, the Education Officer, and so on, are paid, naturally. But they work here all



day—it is their livelihood. It is their business to carry out the orders of the Council—and the Council stands for all the people of the town.

*You.* Where would the money come from if the councillors were paid?

*Councillor Keen.* From the rates, I suppose.

*You.* What exactly are the rates, and who pays them?

*Councillor Keen.* That is a very important question, and if you will kindly sit down for a minute or two on these chairs I will try to make the whole matter quite clear.

Rates are local taxes. They are taxes on property, and the more property you own the more rates you will pay. Every now and again a "valuation" is made of our town. That is to say, we find out what is the value of every piece of land, shop, house, factory, or other building. It is worked out at so much a year. Our Rating Committee sees to this, and any property owner can protest if he thinks his property has been valued too highly. Then his appeal is very carefully considered, and perhaps the valuation will be altered. Now, we say the rates are fixed at so much in the pound. At present, in Yourborough, they amount to 13s. in the pound. This means that for every pound's worth of property a man owns he must pay 13s. Supposing you have a little shop which the Rating Committee valued at £100 a year, then you would have to pay one hundred times 13s. every year in rates. That is £65. Or suppose you own a large house which is valued at £1,000 a year. Then you will have to pay one thousand times 13s. It sounds as if your rates will then be enormous, but if you consider the matter carefully, it will seem quite fair, I think. A man who owns a house worth £1,000 a year

must be receiving a very large income or he would not keep such a large establishment. I should not be surprised if he was getting £10,000 a year at least. Let us do the sum and see exactly what he would pay. One thousand times 13s. is £650. Surely if you had an income of £10,000 a year you could spare £650 for the good of the town in which you had chosen to live and which offered you in return an unlimited pure water supply, a drainage system, wide streets, open spaces? It is true, of course, that you might not make use of many of the benefits. For instance, the rich man does not need the Free Library, and he often does not send his children to the free schools; nor does he spend his Sundays in the parks or make use of our cheap trams, since he has a large garden and several cars of his own. Nevertheless, if he is public-spirited he will not grudge the help he is giving to those who are much less well off.

By the way, owners of factories and such-like concerns do not now, owing to a recent Act of Parliament, have to pay the full amount of rates, as it is thought that this new arrangement will help trade—and farmers pay no rates for their farm buildings.

Perhaps it seems as if most people in the town do not pay rates at all, since the great mass of the people do not possess any house or building of their own. You will find, however, that if you rent any house or flat or room, it is usually you and not the landlord who pays the rates; or if the landlord does pay, then he will raise his rent accordingly.

You can imagine that the amount of the rates is very carefully worked out and it is only settled after all the departments here in this building have decided how much money they need to carry on their work. A little while ago a proposal on the Parks and Open

Spaces Committee to construct a large open-air swimming-bath was hotly opposed because it was going to add a halfpenny to the rates.

The rates are collected in two instalments, twice a year.

Now, I want you to walk about the Town Hall with me and notice the names on the doors. It will give you a good idea of the wide range of work that is done by a Town Council. We will begin along this corridor.

There you see "Waterworks Engineer." His department sees that you get a pure water supply when you turn on a tap in your home.

You may never have seen this town's waterworks, as they are fifty miles away. It takes the water a day and a half to get from the main reservoir to the town. When you think of the channels and tunnels that had to be made to bring it all that way and of the miles and miles of pipes that had to be laid in order to distribute the water to the town, I think you will agree that it is quite a remarkable piece of work and that the men behind that door must know their job. And when I tell you that out of the thirteen shillings in the pound that our townspeople pay in rates only one and twopence goes to this department, you must admit that our water is cheap.

Now we have already passed the offices of the Electrical and Tramways Engineer and we are now approaching the part of the building that deals with Public Health. If you wander along that corridor in front of you, you will see such names as "Chief Medical Officer," "Sanitary Inspector," "Inspector of Nuisances." If we take the lift up to the next floor we should come to the Education Department. I think, however, we will go down these stairs to the ground floor as it is time we went out and looked at

the town itself. There are a great many rooms that we have not approached—for instance, the offices of the Town Clerk. However, you saw that gentleman himself in the Council meeting. He always attends. I am sorry that there is not time to show you any committee rooms, but they are not interesting in themselves, being only large apartments, each containing a table surrounded by chairs. Here, however, in the entrance hall, is something more interesting. It is a list of all the committees and sub-committees that meet this week, with the time of the meeting and the room in which it is to take place. Do you see: "Elementary Education Sub-Committee," "Allotments Committee," "Juvenile Employment Sub-Committee," and so on? A very long list.

Wait one minute before you go out. There you see the Town Hall letter-box where all the letters written in the building are posted. You can see a boy putting in a great batch now. If we could look at the letters closely we should probably find that a number of them were addressed to Government offices in London, especially to the Ministry of Health. You see we are not quite free to do what we like in our town. There are a great many things that we cannot do without the permission either of Parliament or of one of the Ministers. For instance, we could not begin our waterworks years ago until Parliament had passed a "Private Bill" giving us power to do so, and every plan we make for building a new set of "Council houses" has to be passed by the Minister of Health.

Now here comes a postman to collect the letters from the box. He, of course, is a *national* or *civil* servant, and that boy, like every one else working in this building, is a *municipal* servant. Every one

employed by the Government is, as you know, part of the great Civil Service. Sometimes we call all the people who work for our Town Council our "Municipal Civil Service." It includes everybody from the Town Clerk to the dustmen. Now we will go out and see the town.

(For Questions and Suggestions on this chapter see the end of the next.)

## CHAPTER X

### A TRAM RIDE THROUGH THE TOWN

Drains and refuse—Inspection of food—Municipal trading—Police, fire brigade, and ambulance—Hospital and Infant Welfare Centre—"Permissive" or "adoptive" Acts—Schools—Parks—Ugliness—River pollution—Humane killing of animals—Council houses and town-planning.

The system of Local Government in England—The poor—Public Assistance Committee—Municipal theatres, opera houses, and concerts—Lack of will—"A shining city."

A short account of the Local Government of London.

WELL, here we are outside the Town Hall and in the very centre of the Borough. Often when I am waiting here for a tram, after I have been attending some committee meeting, I listen to the roar of activity around me and look at the gutter. Perhaps you consider the gutter rather dull. Personally, I think it arouses some interesting thoughts. Once upon a time, as perhaps you know, people threw away anything they did not want into the gutter—bad fish, dirty water, dead cats, potato peelings. Consequently, going down a side street you often had to hold your nose, and certain fevers were very prevalent. Things



grew particularly bad after the Industrial Revolution when people came crowding to the towns to work in the new factories. Then the Town Councils had to do something. They made drains, they employed dustmen and road sweepers. There is a drain grating in the gutter under our eyes. It leads into a great network of pipes that go under the whole town. The small pipes lead into a very large drain known as the common sewer, and through this the muddy river passes until it is finally filtered and purified by a special process, and the clean water that escapes flows into the river.


The activity around us could not go on without the efficient drainage system which we all take for granted. The "Highways" committee looks after it with the help of the Sewerage Engineer and his department. (We did not see his office in the Town Hall.) The same committee has also to keep the streets in good repair and to name new roads. As for the dust that is swept from the roads and the rubbish that is collected from private dustbins—not to mention the stale fish, meat, and vegetables from the shops—all this is taken to great refuse heaps outside the town. There the rubbish is sorted out, and some of it can be made use of in various ways. The rest is burnt. Personally, I don't think our "Cleansing Committee," whose job it is to arrange for the disposal of the town's rubbish, is quite as successful as it might be. There is rather an unpleasant smell in the neighbourhood of the Corporation Refuse Dumps and a good deal of bad dust is let loose into the air when the dustbins are emptied into the carts by the dustmen. Now, in the German city of Cologne, the household refuse is collected twice a week. The bins are carried off full and closed securely in motor dust-carts, and empty

bins are left in their place. The full bins are emptied into great wagons at certain depots by a special process which allows no dust to escape, and the refuse is then carried off to a special dumping ground where a great deal of it is made into briquettes and sold again as fuel. The scrap metal is also sold. I understand that Cologne hopes soon to make so much money from selling the refuse in this way that the business will pay for itself.

Now I see a tram approaching that will take us to the outskirts of the town. If you don't mind we will board it and I can point out to you a number of interesting things as we go along. Shall we go on top? Hold tight!

I hope you realize that the great principle behind the health work of our Council is the *prevention* of disease. Not only is prevention better than cure, but it is more economical. Some people think we spend an enormous sum in trying to make a town healthy, but it would cost us far more if we neglected the drains, and dust, and bad meat, and spent the money in fever hospitals and burial grounds instead. As it is, one municipal cemetery and one fever hospital are sufficient for our needs.

I mentioned bad meat a moment ago. Now just look quickly, before we pass, at that narrow street crowded with hawkers' stalls. A great many of them are selling meat. What assurance have the poor people who buy there that the meat is fit to eat? Indeed, how are we to know that the great joints hanging up in that large butcher's shop over there have not come from diseased animals? We are told that about one-third of the cows that are killed each year are infected with tuberculosis. What is there to safeguard us against dangerous germs at our dinner



table? Well, it may comfort you to know that nearly every animal killed in the town slaughter-houses is examined by our inspectors, and that meat sold in shops, in the market, or on hawkers' stalls, is also subject to inspection. Of course we cannot guarantee that every piece of meat that is eaten in the town is all right. Not by any means. But if any one suspects the meat in any shop or on any stall he has only to report to our Health Department at the Town Hall and an inspector will be sent to test it. Some bad sausages, made from a diseased animal, were discovered in this way, some years ago, I remember. The man was fined heavily under our bye-laws and all the sausages were destroyed. Our health department has a number of inspectors whose business it is to see that our townspeople are not defrauded either as to quality or quantity. For besides testing meat, milk, vegetables, ice-cream and fried fish, and so on, they also test the weights and the measures. Of course we should want a regular army of inspectors to do the job thoroughly, but they do the best they can. Under various Food and Drugs Acts we are bound to look after our people in this way. We also see that no one but a qualified chemist sells poisons. If a general shop wants to sell weed-killer the shop-keeper has to apply to the Town Hall for permission.

Here comes the conductor for our fares. Take a ticket to the terminus. It is only twopence. You will see that it is not an expensive ride. The trams belong to the Town Council, and we run them as cheaply as possible. The amount taken in fares every year is just enough to pay the costs. We think this is the best arrangement, although in many towns quite a distinct profit or loss is made. If there is a loss it has to be met out of the rates, and if there is a

profit either the rates or the fares can be reduced. In either case the public reap the benefit. Where the trams belong to a private company the profits go to the owners; so you can see there is an advantage in municipal trams. When a Council owns a concern like this out of which it is possible to earn money we call it "Municipal Trading." The name may be rather misleading, as perhaps "trading" suggests to you a market or a shop. However, it is just as much a matter of buying and selling if you go for a ride on a tram as if you buy half a pound of cheese at that provision shop we have just passed. (By the way, did you notice the labels on the margarine? Those are compulsory and our inspectors are very severe on any shopkeeper who tries to pass margarine as butter.) We have just bought, in fact, two pennyworth of tram ride. If we went to the nearest park we could buy six pennyworth of boating, or one shilling's worth of tennis on the municipal tennis courts—two other examples of municipal trading. You can see that most of the services we provide for the town could not earn money. You cannot earn money with a drainage system, or with a fever hospital, or with schools that either charge no fees at all or else very small ones. No private company therefore would want to take these things from us. But I can assure you we could sell our trams and our electricity to-morrow if we wished. Electricity and water are our other chief examples of municipal trading, but water does not easily yield a profit. All the lighting of these streets and all the electric light and power in these houses and shops are provided by our Council. As you know, there is an indicator in every house showing how much electricity is used, and the Council charges accordingly. If we sold our power stations to a

private company we should save ourselves a great deal of trouble; but we should have to pay the company a great sum of money for the lighting of the streets and public buildings, and certainly the townspeople would find all their electricity more expensive, as naturally the company would expect to make a profit. Now our gas is in the hands of a private company—the Your-borough Gas Company. They have supplied the town for many years now. I do not think they make an excessive charge for it, and we could only buy the gas-works from them at a very high figure. In fact, we have not got enough money, so that we should have to borrow it, and that would mean getting the permission of a Government Department. We always have to get permission when we want to borrow money. We should have to pay interest on this loan until we had wiped off the debt, so it would be a long time before we could make the gas supply a paying concern.

The only other important piece of municipal trading that we do is now under our eyes. You see we have come to the Market. That belongs to the Council, and all stall-holders pay us fees.

Some people are very enthusiastic about municipal trading and would like us to do more in that direction. They point to Bristol's Docks, to the Manchester Ship Canal and to Birmingham's famous Municipal Bank. They urge us to run our own milk supply. One town did this during the war, and it found it could provide cheaper and cleaner milk than had been supplied before. That would be an important double advantage. The average amount of milk drunk per day in this town is half a pint. That is rather little when you think of all the children and delicate people. And I am afraid our milk is no cleaner than that of other



towns in spite of the hard work of our own inspectors and those sent down by the Ministry of Health. Some time ago the milk supplied to the hospitals of one of our largest industrial towns was compared with the milk of New York and it was found to be equal to their lowest standard—in fact, to the milk they only use for cooking.

On the other hand there are people who say that we could not make any real improvements by further experiments in municipal trading. They say that we should burden ourselves with work that we could not effectively carry out. Personally, I have not made up my mind on this subject.

We seem to be held up here a long time. I wonder if there is a fire somewhere. I thought I heard the bell of the fire engine. If it passes us you will perhaps see the new engine that our Watch Committee has just acquired. The Fire Brigade, like the police, are under the Watch Committee. I always admire the Your-borough police. You wouldn't better them anywhere. The Home Office regularly send down someone to inspect them, and I understand they always get a good report.

Now we are going on. Oh, I see there has been a slight accident. I hope no one is hurt. If there is any injury one of our Watch Committee's ambulances will be along. No. Can you see? It seems that two private cars have locked wheels. It looks to me as if one of them hadn't been within the white lines put down by the Highways Committee at this corner.

Now we are making progress. There's the General Hospital. That does not belong to the Council, although we contribute to the expenses. It chiefly depends on voluntary contributions. Has it ever struck you in England how private charity often

works hand in hand with the municipalities? The Infant Welfare Centres are another case in point. These were started years ago by private people who wanted to help poor mothers. Then, after the War, the Council joined with them. We now pay the cost of the buildings and equipment and we send our own Assistant Medical Officer (a woman) to superintend, but the helpers still give their services free. I expect you know that the purpose of these Centres is that mothers shall bring their babies to be weighed and examined regularly and that they shall be advised about the babies' health.

Some towns have a Day Nursery where babies can be left while their mothers go to work; but we haven't one. And I am sorry to say we have not yet started a nursery school for children under five. There is a splendid one at Deptford in London. Perhaps you have heard about it.

I expect you understand that there are a great many things that a Council *must* do and a great many things that it *may* do. In every case there is an Act of Parliament, for all our powers are given to us by Parliamentary Acts; but whereas some Acts command, others merely make suggestions. If we wanted to do something that Parliament had never yet considered we should have to beg that a special Act might be passed. The Acts which tell us we may do something if we wish are called the "permissive" or "adoptive" Acts (because we can adopt the suggestion). Acts about the provision of Baths, Wash-houses, Parks, Allotments are of this kind.

But we are bound to provide education just as we are bound to provide drains. We shall soon pass an elementary and a secondary school, fairly close together. They are both under our Education Committee,

although a different sub-committee is appointed for each type of school. Less than half the cost of maintaining these schools is borne by the ratepayers. The rest of the money is supplied by Parliament and therefore comes out of the taxes. There are also some church schools in the town. They are called "Non-provided schools," because they are not provided by the State, but the State gives them grants. The Board of Education sends inspectors to see the schools are satisfactory. There, you see, are the two schools I mentioned. They are much the same as any others. There is a motor that I recognize, I think, outside the elementary school. I believe it belongs to the Medical Officer of Health who also acts as chief School Doctor. There is evidently a medical inspection going on. All our school children are regularly inspected and they are sent to clinics for simple treatment. Besides these schools and others like them the town has special schools for children who are semi-invalids or who are mentally defective, as well as two technical schools.

Then of course we run evening classes and offer scholarships to the University. The fees, where they exist, only cover a very tiny proportion of a child's education.

Now we are approaching the outskirts of the town. This is mostly a prosperous, residential neighbourhood. The people who live in these large houses will pay fairly heavy rates although land and property is naturally not so valuable as near the centre of the city. Away to the left there is the Municipal Cemetery. I suppose we must call that an example of municipal trading since we make a charge for each burial. In the old days the churchyards were the only burial grounds, but with increased population and crowded towns they are insufficient. There is the pleasantest

of our three parks, on our right. Can you see the swings and the sand heap for children? All the courts seem to be in use. I believe they yield quite a substantial profit. The Parks Committee use all profits for improving and extending the open spaces that belong to the town. They hope soon to buy extensive playing fields for the elementary schools. Did you notice the monument just inside the park gate? What do you think of it? Personally I think it is exceedingly ugly. It is a memorial of the South African War and was presented to the town by a general who fought against the Boers. And there by the river is another monstrosity in the shape of a very ugly factory. Factories need not be ugly. Now if we were in New York instead of Yourborough neither the monument nor the factory would have been allowed. All monuments, buildings, statues, and so on, have to be passed by the New York Art Commission before they can be put up. It is a special committee consisting of the Mayor and various people whose good taste is well known. They say it has done wonders for New York. Personally, I should be a little afraid of their censorship becoming old-fashioned, for Art changes like everything else. I wonder if they approve of the sculptures of Mr. Epstein. Notice this pleasant house on our left. It is the Blind Institution and it is partly supported by the Council and partly by voluntary contributions—another example of partnership between the Council and private charity. Now we cross the river. I did not mention the River Pollution Committee which sees that the river is no dirtier than it need be. If that ugly factory empties barrels of oil into it, the owner will be most heavily fined. Now we are going to be held up by these sheep. I am afraid they are being driven to the slaughter. They

seem to know it by the noise they make. But they are not forgotten by the Council. Every slaughter house has to keep certain bye-laws which not only ensure cleanliness but also insist on the most humane methods of killing. Inspectors see to this for the sake of the animals as well as inspecting the carcasses to save us from infectious germs.

Here we are at the end of our journey and at the beginning of a new garden suburb. If you don't mind we will walk to the top of the hill and look at the view. The suburb, you see, is still being built. These are all Council houses. Before the War it was an unheard-of thing for a Council to build houses, but afterwards there was such a shortage of house accommodation that Parliament passed various Acts explaining that we must do so. They tried various plans to get over the one great difficulty—the lack of money. The final arrangement was that the Council should draw up a Housing Scheme and send it to the Ministry of Health for approval. If it was passed, then the Ministry would give the Council so much money (called a "subsidy") for each house set up. This would enable the Council to let the house at a reasonable rent. Even so, the rents are too high for the poorest people. All these houses are being let at twelve shillings to one pound a week, inclusive of rates. We also have the right to clear away any slums in the middle of the city and build new flats; but the Government Grant for that is not very much, and so far I'm afraid we have done very little, although our sanitary inspectors bully the landlords into doing necessary repairs.

I hope you like this garden suburb. Our Town Planning Committee is very proud of it. If that Committee could have its way I believe it would pull



down the whole of Yourborough and build it again. Our town planning powers have come rather late in the life of the town, and all that we can do now is to make plans for new developments.

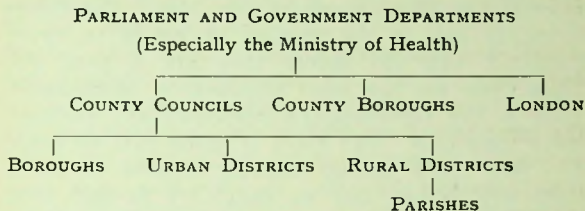
Now for the view.

We are just on the town boundary, and there is the familiar English countryside before us. If we walked into the next field we should be beyond the range of Yourborough bye-laws and under a different Council altogether. In fact, we should be under more than one Council. About a mile away you can see a little village. You notice the church? The building next to it, on the right, is the Village Hall, and there from time to time a Parish Council meets. It is a very simple affair, and there are only a certain number of matters that it may take in hand. One of them is to provide a playing field for the people of the parish. You can see the men playing cricket. The Parish Council has nothing to do with the church. We are so accustomed to hear people talk of parish magazines that it is not always known that the church parish in the country is also a division for local government. I don't think I have used the expression "local government" before, but I am sure you now understand what it means, and you will have realized by now that bye-laws are the laws made by a local authority. Now farther off still, away to the right of the village, can you see a small town? It is very small indeed compared with Yourborough. A "Rural District Council" meets there once a week to look after, not only the town itself, but a good deal of the country round about, including the little parish we were just now considering. In fact it supervises several parishes and does various things that the Parish Councils cannot conveniently do. For instance, it collects

rubbish and maintains a standard of cleanliness. But there are other things beyond its powers: it may not manage its own schools. These and many other important matters are in the care of the County Council. Away beyond the horizon is the County Town of Yourchester where the County Council meets about four times a year to supervise the Local Government of Yourshire. The County Council offices are much the same as a Town Hall, and the County Council is very like a Town Council except that there is a Chairman instead of a Mayor. The work is done in committees, just as with us.

Now this is the scheme of Local Government in England. Every county has its own *County Council*; and every town in the county that is in some way important is called a *County Borough* and has its own Council. Yourborough is a County Borough and the County Council cannot interfere with us. We are important because we are a big industrial town; but other county boroughs are much smaller. You will find that they are very old, however, and that is where their importance comes in. Any other big towns who have not the honour of calling themselves County Boroughs are merely *boroughs*. There is not very much difference between the two, except that a County Council has a right to interfere in the affairs of a borough. The rest of the county, apart from these large towns, is divided into districts. Every district is centred round a little town. If it is a considerable little town the district will be called an *urban* district, and if it is a very little town the district will be called a *rural* district. Each kind of district has its Council. Every rural district is divided into parishes with Parish Councils over them—unless there are less than three hundred people altogether in the

parish, in which case there is, instead, a Parish Meeting to which all electors come. I will draw on this piece of paper a little plan to make things clearer.



You see that in the second line I have put London in a division by itself. That is because London has a form of Local Government which is peculiar to itself. I have not time to describe it, but I am going to ask you to take this little pamphlet home with you to read later on by yourselves.<sup>1</sup> It is a short account that I have written about the Local Government of London. Even if you are not Londoners I think you would like to know how things are managed in the biggest city in the world.

Now we must walk back down the hill to the tram terminus. See how the town looks almost like gold in the light of the setting sun. And I was just thinking that perhaps I had given you too golden an account of the work of our Council. For you must not think I am quite satisfied with what we have done for the borough. I do not think that any enthusiast for Local Government, any one who sees its great possibilities, would feel that his local authority was entirely satisfactory. (You know that we call every council, of whatever kind, a local authority?) Personally, I think that any big industrial town has reason

<sup>1</sup> See p. 141.

to be ashamed of its poorest streets, and ours is no exception. We have many, many houses that are overcrowded and unhealthy, and the rate of infant mortality in those houses is very high. The infant mortality rate is the number of babies in every thousand who die before they are a year old. Then there are the great numbers of unemployed. That is the Government's responsibility, perhaps, more than ours. But there is much that we could do. We could set up training centres to teach them new trades, and we could try to find temporary work for them in our own service. As a matter of fact this new road down which we walk now was made by some of the Yourborough unemployed, but I am afraid it only helped a very few of them. Everybody agrees that it is better for them to have work than to live idly on their insurance money (which people wrongly call the "dole"), but you see it is very expensive and very difficult setting up new jobs for them, and you have to be careful that you do not simply take the work from one man and give it to another. Then there are a great many men and women who are not entitled to any unemployment pay, and these are the poorest and most unfortunate of all. There are hundreds of them in every big town and they live in dark basements, dilapidated attics, and crowded back rooms. Some of them drift into the Workhouse, which is supported out of the rates; but nowadays no one goes there except as a last resource. It is chiefly a refuge for the old and the sick. The hospital part of it we call the Infirmary. When poor people go to the Workhouse we say they are receiving *in-relief*; but if they receive grants of food or money in their own homes (hovels would often be a better word) it is called *out-relief*. When

a man or woman is absolutely without any means of livelihood he or she can go to the nearest Relieving Officer, who takes down all particulars and often gives immediate help. These are then put before the Public Assistance Committee, which looks into the matter. I have not mentioned this Committee before, but although I have spoken of it last you must not think it is least in importance. Indeed, in some ways it is our most important committee, for it looks after people who have fallen out in the terrific struggle to live. You may read in Local Government books about "Boards of Guardians." These were special committees for looking after the poor, but they no longer exist. They were especially elected apart from the members of Councils, but by a recent Act of Parliament the Public Assistance Committees, which are ordinary committees of the County Councils and the County Borough Councils, have been made to supersede them. They have a large proportion of co-opted members.

Another criticism I should make of our Corporation and of many other local authorities is that we do not do all we might for the minds of our people. In other countries you will find municipal theatres and municipal opera houses. These nowhere exist in England. Yourborough Corporation does nothing educational for our people in their leisure hours except offer them a limited supply of books at the Free Library. We do not even organize municipal concerts.

Perhaps you think money is the chief obstacle. It is a considerable one of course; but personally I believe that where there's a will there's a way. No, there is not enough will for these things. Even some of our Aldermen and Councillors have not the determination and spirit I would like to see. Everything is done



so slowly, too. First a sub-committee considers a matter, then a full committee, then the Town Council. And after that it may have to go to a Government Department for approval. This last stage is always a long one. Take for instance the matter of that new secondary school in Kitchener Road. I know that the Education Committee have found an excellent site for it; but by the time it is decided whether one or two schools shall be built, the site may be sold to some private person. That has happened before.

Perhaps if the ordinary people took more interest in their Councils all the local authorities would be stimulated and speeded up. Think about this when you get home and see what *you* can do.

But I must not end our expedition with a moral, as that is always a bad conclusion. Perhaps as we still have to wait for a tram you will allow me to recite to you an appropriate poem:

A shining city, one  
Happy in snow and sun,  
And singing in the rain  
A paradisaical strain . . .  
Here is a dream to keep,  
O Builders, from your sleep.

O foolish Builders, wake,  
Take your trowels, take  
The poet's dream, and build  
The city song has willed,  
That every stone may sing  
And all your roads may ring  
With happy wayfaring.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John Drinkwater: *Collected Poems*.

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF  
LONDON

From anywhere in London it is very easy to go by Underground to "the Bank," and when you emerge into daylight you will find yourself in the very heart of the Metropolis. There is the Bank of England, and there the Royal Exchange, and there the Mansion House. This last is the home of the Lord Mayor. He is London's chief citizen, and when distinguished visitors from foreign lands come to the capital he welcomes them and entertains them on behalf of all Londoners. He also frequently receives Cabinet Ministers. In fact, his time is largely taken up with receptions of one kind or another.

Nevertheless he is not strictly speaking Lord Mayor of the whole of London, but only of the "City"; and people do not always realize how small a place the City is. It is, in fact, only about one square mile in area. But it is the original London, and a few hundred years ago you could easily walk from where the Mansion House now stands to one of the city gates and thence into the fields. The names Moorgate, Aldgate, Bishopsgate, and so on, remind us where these gates once stood, and we can imagine the city walls in which they were built. In those days many famous guilds or companies were found in the City and each one was concerned with a special trade. Among others there were the Goldsmiths, the Haberdashers, the Merchant Taylors, the Grocers. Each had its own livery and so they came to be known as the "livery companies." Not only did they maintain a high standard of work in their own trades, but they looked after their members in illness or misfortune and provided for the education of their children. This was long ago and the Guild

system has long disappeared, but the companies still exist, although nowadays they have nothing to do with trade, being merely wealthy societies. But they have continued to use their money for the cause of education, as you can tell from the names of various schools. They have also bought and set aside for the enjoyment of the public various open spaces in, or near, London, such as Highgate Woods and Epping Forest. One privilege from the old days still remains to them: they help to elect the Lord Mayor. This is, of course, something peculiar in Local Government. In the provincial towns the Mayors and Lord Mayors are elected by the Town Councils. The Council of the City of London, over which the Lord Mayor presides, is also elected in an unusual way; for whereas in the rest of the country nearly every grown-up person has a municipal vote, in the City it is a privilege held only by those who own certain property. This "Common Council," as it is called, is chosen annually on 21 December. It consists of two hundred and six Common Councillors and twenty-six Aldermen, and the Aldermen are also elected by the citizens; the difference being that the Aldermen are chosen for life. However, as the Common Councillors are usually re-elected the election is not a sensational event. The Common Council have much the same duties as any Town Council and they carry them out by means of Committees. They also control the great London markets such as Smithfield, Billingsgate, Islington, Deptford, although these are outside the city, and they look after the cleanliness of the Thames from the mouth of the river up to Teddington. Beyond there it is under the Thames Conservancy.

The most remarkable fact about the City is that it is quite independent of the London County Council, which

supervises the whole of London except this tiny circle in the middle. The City is also practically independent of Parliament, so that it is the most free local authority in the country.

If you take a bus from the Bank to Westminster, you will find on the south side of the Thames, and almost facing the Houses of Parliament, the recently built County Hall. This is the home of the London County Council.

The L.C.C. is like any other County Council but with much more work to do. It has to look after a small but densely populated county where all kinds of people live and a great variety of work is done. The County of London is divided into twenty-eight Metropolitan Boroughs, each with its own Council, and the L.C.C. leaves certain local matters such as the lighting and cleansing of streets, the removal of refuse, the provision of baths and libraries to these; but Education it keeps entirely in its own hands. And here, in Education, we find its one finger in the City; the elementary schools in the City are under the L.C.C. and not the City Corporation. The L.C.C. also provides the Fire Brigade for the whole of London. The drainage system is managed by the L.C.C. and the Metropolitan Boroughs together, the nine great main sewers being the property of the County and all the local sewers, which join these, belonging to the Boroughs. The drainage system of London is a great masterpiece. The sewerage is filtered, the clean water runs into the Thames, and the remaining "sludge" is pumped into the tanks of specially constructed boats. Then it is taken out to sea and emptied, twelve miles from land.

There are certain responsibilities which you would expect to fall to the L.C.C. and which are not in its

hands at all. One of these is the Police Force. The City has its own police; but once outside the City area we meet members of another force. They are known as the Metropolitan Police and they are under a Commissioner at Scotland Yard. The area in which they serve is bigger than London; it extends into the Home Counties; and if the police in the provinces are at any time insufficient to deal with any difficulties some of the Metropolitan Police may be ordered by the Home Office to go to their aid.

Another matter outside the rule of the L.C.C. is the care of the London Docks. These are under the Port of London Authority, a body of twenty-nine members, some of whom are appointed and some elected by those who chiefly use the docks. Among the appointed members are two from the Corporation of London and four from the L.C.C., so there is a link with the local authorities. A third matter which is not in the hands of the L.C.C. is London's water supply. This is managed by a number of experts known as the Metropolitan Water Board. This authority was set up at the beginning of the present century by an Act of Parliament and it collects a water rate from the houses it serves.

There was, until lately, a Metropolitan Asylums Board to provide hospitals for infectious diseases and asylums for mental defectives, but these duties and others have now been transferred to the L.C.C.

London is well supplied with buses and trams; the buses belong to private companies and the trams to the L.C.C. There is a loss at present on the tramway services, and this has to be made up out of the rates. On the other hand the fares are extremely cheap and there are exceptionally good facilities for children and for long journeys. If these were abolished, or if the



fares were very slightly raised, a substantial profit would easily follow.

Supposing you were to motor right through London from East to West with your thoughts on Local Government. Your reflections might be something like these:

"I am approaching London although I am still in the County of Essex. . . . Here are some L.C.C. Council houses, which is rather strange; but I suppose the L.C.C. has hardly room within its own borders for its housing schemes. . . . This is evidently the Rural District Council of Romford. . . . I had better not put on too much speed as although this isn't London yet I am within the area of the Metropolitan Police and they are perhaps more alert than the County Police. . . . Now I must slow up, for this is Barking which is an Urban District under the Essex County Council. I'll stop for some petrol and some water here—London water, of course, as I'm just in the area served by the Metropolitan Water Board.

"What a number of Londons there seem to be—the County of London under the L.C.C., the postal area of London which is larger, the Metropolitan Water area which is larger still, and the Metropolitan Police area which is the largest of all. Then, presently, I shall reach the City of London which, although insignificant in size, is in some respects the most important London of all.

"This is the County Borough of East Ham. The address of the people who live here is 'London,' but they are not in the County of London. Nor are all the people who live in this busy County Borough of West Ham ahead of me. . . . Here is the West Ham Town Hall, a most imposing building, although hardly beautiful. . . . There is an L.C.C. school. I must be

in the real Metropolis at last. Yes, this is the Metropolitan Borough of Poplar. I remember that the Metropolitan Boroughs do not deal with education. That is left to the county authority. Poplar evidently has a Library and Baths. . . . I will turn south a little and get a glimpse of the docks. . . . Yes, there is the river. At the bottom of that street I can see the funnels of boats. The river, of course, is under the Port of London Authority. . . . I must now be in Stepney, for there is a notice pointing the way to the Stepney Baths. . . . These Metropolitan Boroughs all appear to have Public Libraries and Baths. . . . I am passing a great number of L.C.C. schools.

"Progress is now very slow. None of these Councils, nor Parliament itself, seems to have succeeded in solving the London traffic problem. . . . The policeman who holds me up has a different appearance from the others I have lately seen. Of course, I have just passed Aldgate station, I am in the City. He is one of the City Police. . . . Here is the Mansion House where the Lord Mayor lives. . . . This is the wealthiest of the Londons, and at this time of the day the most crowded. It must be singularly quiet at night. . . . Now I see I am in the City of Westminster, which is the most distinguished of the Metropolitan Boroughs and therefore has a special title. But it is under the L.C.C. There is one of the L.C.C. fire stations. . . . Now the roads are quieter. I am in the Metropolitan Borough of Kensington. There is its Town Hall and Public Library. . . . This must be Hammersmith Broadway ahead of me, so I am in another Metropolitan Borough. . . . Here is Hammersmith Bridge. . . . And now I am out of the County of London again, for this is Barnes, which is an Urban District in Surrey. . . . I believe I must presently go through a corner of the Borough of

Richmond which is also in Surrey. . . . This is Twickenham, an Urban District of Middlesex. . . . I am approaching the country again. Here is actually a Rural District—Staines. I left the Metropolitan Water Board behind when I passed out of Twickenham, and when I cross the next boundary line I shall be beyond the supervision of the Metropolitan Police—then I shall put on speed.”

## QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON CHAPTERS IX AND X

### Pictures for your notebook

Whether you live in the town or the country there will be so many things that you can find out for yourself about your own local authority and the work it does, that it would, perhaps, be a good idea to have a separate notebook for these two chapters. Local postcards and photographs in the local paper will supply you with illustrations of public buildings, streets, parks, monuments, “council houses” and the councillors themselves. If you have a camera of your own there is no limit to the number of suitable pictures that you can procure. You might then, perhaps, illustrate in some way the work of each separate Committee of your Council.

### Things to find out for yourself

You will not find two local authorities in the country that govern their towns or districts or counties in exactly the same way; therefore it is very interesting to find out exactly how your own locality manages its affairs. Try to answer the following questions, or as many of them as you can, as fully as possible. Do not be content with “Yes” or “No.” Some of the answers you may know already, others you can discover from observation, or by asking your friends and relations. The *Municipal Year Book* (to be found in most public libraries), any local guide-book, local newspapers, or any publications of your Council, will also help.

Those who live in the country and are under Parish, Rural, and County Councils will not be able to answer some of the questions so simply as those who live under a Town or Urban District Council, for as we have seen, in the country, the work

is very much shared out among these different Councils. Country readers must, therefore, say exactly which Council they mean in each case. Those who live in London will also have to make it clear when they refer to their own Metropolitan Borough, and when they refer to the L.C.C.

- Under what local authority (or authorities) do you live?
- Where is your Town Hall or where are your Council Offices?
- Who is your Mayor or Chairman?
- When are your Council elections?
- Are all the Council elected at once, or do one-third of the Councillors retire every year?
- How many Councillors are there?
- How many Aldermen (if any)?
- Make a list of the Committees.
- Who is your Town Clerk, or Clerk to the Council?
- Who is your Education Officer (sometimes called Director of Education, or Education Secretary)?
- Who is your M.O.H. (abbreviation for Medical Officer of Health)?
- What is your General Rate?
- What is your Education Rate?
- What is your Water Rate?
- Does your Council or a private company supply you with Water?
- From where does the Water come?
- What happens to your Sewerage?
- In what way does your Council dispose of Refuse? (How often and in what manner is the rubbish collected, and what is done with it afterwards?)
- Does your Council run its own Trams or Buses?
- Do these make a profit?
- Does the Council own Electricity or Gas undertakings?
- Does it go in for any other form of "municipal trading"?
- Does your Council provide a Police Force, or are you served by some outside constabulary?
- How many Fire Engines have you?
- How many Ambulances have you?
- Does your Highways (or Streets) Committee make any special arrangements to aid the Traffic?
- Have you a municipal general Hospital, or does your Council contribute from the rates to a voluntary hospital?
- What Isolation Hospitals have you?
- What Burial Grounds have you?

Where are your Infant Welfare Centres?

Have you special Schools for Mental and Physical Defectives?

(What is the difference between these two kinds of defectives?)

What Clinics for school children or others have you?

Have you any Technical Schools?

Have you a Public Library, a Public Swimming Bath, any Parks, or Public Playing Fields?

What Houses has your Council built? Describe them, and give the rents.

Does your Council provide municipal Concerts?

Where is your Workhouse?

What happened at the last meeting of your Council? (See local paper.)

### Questions requiring long answers

Draw a map of your town or district showing the work of your local authority (e.g. Town Hall or Offices, libraries, parks, schools, waterworks, council houses, etc.).

Describe the local government of any foreign town or district. (See any guide-book, encyclopædia, etc.)

### Meaning of words

Urban, rural, municipality, corporation, bye-law, refuse, sewerage, locality.

### Things to think out for yourself

1. Why is it better to leave certain matters to local councils instead of making them part of the business of Parliament?

2. Supposing Parliament or Cabinet Ministers appointed special experts to each town and county, and gave them the authority to look after local affairs—would this be better or worse than the present arrangement? Why?

3. Draw or plan a suitable building for a Town Hall (or Council Offices).

4. What are the arguments for and against Municipal Trading?

5. Write an imaginary letter to your Mayor or Chairman pointing out anything in your locality that requires attention.

### Game

The work of a local authority can be well illustrated by a



number of scenes. If these are acted in dumb show the audience can be told to guess the meaning. The following might be especially suited for this purpose (and you can think of others):

Inspection of meat, inspection of milk, inspection of weights and measures, a medical inspection of school children, weighing the babies at an Infant Welfare Centre, the formal opening of a new park, cheap travel on municipal trams, the dustmen's round, the fire brigade and ambulance at work, the city police on duty, the sanitary inspector on his rounds.

An imaginary meeting of your Council, or one of its committees, makes a good form of debate.

#### Reference books

The following are some of the more recently published books on Local Government:

*How the Ratepayer is Governed*, K. Rosenberg.  
(Newnes, 3s. 6d.)

*Local Government: a Simple Treatise*, E. Ashford.  
(King, 2s. 6d.)

*Outlines of Local Government* (1930 edn.), J. J. Clarke.

Also to be recommended are:

*The Municipal Year Book*.

*How York Governs Itself*, Morrell and Watson.

*A City Council from Within*, Morrell and Watson.

## CHAPTER XI

THE STORY OF PERCY BROWN, WHICH ILLUSTRATES THE  
ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAW IN ENGLAND

Petty theft—The Police Station—Magistrates—J.P.s—The Police Court—"Summary jurisdiction"—Children's Courts—The Police Court Missionary or Probation Officer—The Coroner's Court—The County Court—Breaking a bye-law—The Petty Sessions again—A burglary—Arrest—Detention cells—Bail—Quarter Sessions—Counsel—The jury—"A "true bill"—The Prosecution and the Defence—The Witness Box—Cross-examination—The verdict—"Bound over in their own recognizances"—Remand—Borstal—Probation—The High Court of Justice—Imprisonment—The Assizes and the Central Criminal Court—The Court of Criminal Appeal—Convict prisons.

THIS is the story of Percy Brown who was somewhat unfortunate in his early years.

Percy was one of a family of eight, living in two rooms. That is to say there were his father, mother, grandmother, three brothers and one sister. There had been others, but they had died. The rooms were inconvenient and not very clean—the house in fact had been condemned by the sanitary inspector and was eventually to be pulled down. It was situated in a slum area, where people were often found drunk and where policemen were looked upon with suspicion. "Coppers" they were called.

Percy's interest in policemen began when he played test matches in the road with an old bat and a punctured rubber ball. The nearest park was so far away that he and his friends felt obliged to disregard the law; but they took the precaution of keeping one of their number as watchman at the corner. Once

they were caught and threatened with the police station, whereupon they changed their pitch to another street.

Sometimes in the school holidays Percy and his friends grew tired of their usual amusements and sought for higher adventures. Percy never had any ideas; but his friends had. One day one of them suggested to Percy that it might be possible to get the money out of automatic machines. A station that had just been closed seemed a suitable scene for action. They approached it at dusk and by means of the skilful operations of Percy's older friend they managed to extract one and sixpence from a machine that guaranteed to tell you your correct weight for one penny. They immediately divided the spoil equally. Percy put sixpence in one pocket for himself and threepence in another for his mother, thinking he would tell her that he had earned it. They then began to explore the further resources of the station, and Percy was just wondering if any money had been left in the booking office when he found a policeman's grip on his collar. His friend had disappeared. He was immediately marched off to the Police Station where the first policeman reported his discovery to a second policeman and Percy was made to empty both pockets. He was very frightened, especially by the second policeman, who was without a helmet, wrote everything down in a book, and talked of "petty theft." Some time later his father arrived, very angry. He undertook that Percy should appear at the Police Court on the following Monday, and after various other things had been written down he was allowed to take his son home. There he gave Percy a flogging; but this was not an unusual event.

The next Monday, as his father was at work, Percy was conducted by his mother to the Police Court.

Every town has its Police Court. It is quite distinct from the Police Station, being the place where magistrates hear the charges against offenders and decide whether they are to be punished. In London and certain large towns, where the cases to be heard are very numerous, the magistrates are especially trained and paid men. They are called stipendiary magistrates (because they receive a "stipend" or salary). In the rest of the country the work is done by unpaid magistrates known as Justices of the Peace. They are often referred to as "J.P.s" and they are allowed to put these letters after their names, just as Members of Parliament may add, M.P. In bygone days J.P.s did a good deal of the work that is now done by County Councils. They were then always men of considerable wealth and social position, which meant that they sometimes dealt hardly with the poor. Nowadays we have a more democratic arrangement. Any one can become a J.P., however poor or whatever his calling, so long as he has shown himself able and willing to serve his fellow-citizens and to possess personal qualities suitable for the position. All J.P.s are appointed by the Lord Chancellor, who of course is head of all judges, magistrates, and lawyers in the land, but the appointment is made in the King's name. A man or woman (the honour is now open to both sexes) does not ask to be made a J.P., but when vacancies occur, a local advisory committee sends forward recommendations to the Lord Chancellor. People who have shown their ability on local councils are often recommended, and a Mayor or a chairman of a local council is *ex officio* J.P. while he holds that office. There must always be at least two J.P.s to hear a case. One of them is the Chairman and takes the lead.

When Percy and his mother after waiting nervously

in the lobby were called into the Police Court they found themselves in a fair-sized room with what looked like a raised pew along one end. This was the "bench" where the magistrates sat. (Hence J.P.s are often referred to collectively as "the Bench.") As Percy lived in a small town he was to be tried by J.P.s and not by a stipendiary magistrate. There were four of them sitting there and they looked very impressive in their raised position. Immediately below them a man sat at a table strewn with papers. He was the Clerk, a trained lawyer, employed to assist the magistrates when they wanted to know what the law said on any matter. He also helped to conduct each case, as will be seen presently. On the right of the bench was a square enclosure with the words "Witness Box" painted on it, and on the other side of the room there was a similar box in which prisoners could be placed. That was the dock. Facing the magistrates were a few rows of seats where various people sat. One or two were lawyers; then there were newspaper reporters and members of the public.

Percy's mother was told to bring her son in front of the dock and stand just behind him. The Clerk then read out the charge. Then the policeman who had caught Percy went into the witness box and took a New Testament in his hand. He said: "I swear before Almighty God that the evidence which I shall give before the court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," and proceeded to recount how he had discovered Percy in the railway station. He kept referring to a notebook in which he had taken down the particulars. The charge of stealing money being an "indictable offence" (that is, not triable by a Petty Sessional Court except by consent of the accused), Percy was asked by the Clerk



if he desired to be tried by a jury at the next Court of Quarter Sessions of the Peace for the County, or whether he would consent to be tried "summarily." Being tried summarily, as was explained to him, meant being tried by the Petty Sessional Court before whom he was then appearing. Percy, having consented to be tried summarily, was asked to plead "guilty" or "not guilty" to the charge, and if he had anything to say in answer to it. To this, being dazed, he replied nothing. The Court, having considered the evidence, found Percy was guilty of the charge against him.

When this was concluded the Chairman of the magistrates asked Mrs. Brown if she had anything to say; but she seemed almost as frightened as Percy. Then another of the magistrates asked her in a kindly tone if her son was a good boy at home and at school, to which Mrs. Brown, finding her voice, answered that he was a good son and there were no complaints about him at school except that he was very slow at his lessons, and that she was sure he would never do any harm if he wasn't wrongly led. The Chairman thereupon asked the policeman if anything was known of the boy or his family. The officer replied that the police had nothing against them, although they lived in a bad neighbourhood, that the father was a labourer who did not take much care of his family.

"Fined twenty shillings," said the Chairman, after conferring for a moment with his fellow-magistrates, and Percy and his mother were hurried out of the court. When Mr. Brown heard the amount of the fine required of him he gave his son another flogging.

What has just been described is an example of court procedure in "summary jurisdiction," or trial without jury. If a daring burglary or murder had been committed in the town where Percy lived the

charge would first have been heard at the same court by the J.P.s, but afterwards the case would have been sent to a higher court, since the offence would have been too serious to be dealt with summarily. The meeting of the court attended by Percy is known as the Petty Sessions. It meets usually once or twice a week, although in a large town like London the courts are held every day.

It is important to remember that Percy's first experience of a Police Court was many years ago—for he is now a grown man—and that certain changes have taken place since then. In the first place children are no longer made to appear in the ordinary court with everybody present. They either come before the magistrates in some other and quite ordinary room, or else the court is cleared of every one except those especially connected with the case. When people talk of "Children's Courts" they have one of these alternatives in mind. Then, much more interest is taken in child offenders to-day, and an attempt is made to find out why they committed the offence. Perhaps there is something wrong with the child's mind and he ought to go to a mental doctor, perhaps he is so little cared for by his parents that he would be better in an Industrial School where he would learn a trade as well as his lessons. Or perhaps he really wants some stern discipline and would be best sent to a Reformatory. On the other hand he may be quite a normal healthy boy with no proper outlet for his energies, and if only he could join a boys' club, or become a scout, and thus find new and interesting ways of spending his leisure time, he would never give the police or any one else serious trouble.

To find out all about the young offender is now the business of Probation Officers. If you went now to

the court where Percy had to appear you would find two people holding this position—a man and a woman. You might take them for members of the public as they wear no uniform. But you would find them always in court, and when children come before the magistrates they are more often than not put under the care of one of them. In other words, the children are put on Probation. This means that they are on their honour to behave well for a certain period of time—perhaps a year—and during that time the Probation Officer will give advice and help in a friendly manner. This work was previously done by a Church of England organization called the Police Court Missionaries, and their work proved so valuable that the Home Office, which you will remember is the Government Department in control of police and prisons, decided to take a share in the work. Probation Officers are now partly under the Church authority and partly under the Home Office. One-third of their salaries are in fact paid by the Home Office out of public funds. This means that there can now be many more people doing the work than formerly. It so happened that there was no Police Court Missionary attached to the court where Percy's case was heard. Otherwise, even in those days, he might have found an older friend to look after him.

As Percy's father took no interest in his children other than to shout bad language at them or to flog them, Percy was not particularly distressed when Mr. Brown's body was found in the canal. Indeed, it proved quite a sensation, for when any one dies suddenly there has to be an inquest to discover the cause of death and find out if there has been any suspicion of foul play. This is undertaken by the Coroner's Court, and although they may use the ordinary Police

Court building for their purpose it has nothing whatever to do with the Petty Sessions. The Coroner is appointed by the Town or County Council and receives a salary, but it is not he who gives the verdict. This is the responsibility of the Jury, and any householder in the district may be required to serve as a juryman for the occasion. It is very difficult to get exemption if you are summoned to serve on a jury, and although people may plead important business engagements or declare that they are deaf they are not often let off.

At the inquest held on the body of Mr. Brown it was decided that death was due to "suicide whilst of unsound mind." Mr. Brown had been out of employment for some weeks and it was thought that the worry occasioned by this had led him to take his life. Mrs. Brown and various neighbours gave evidence before the Coroner and his jury, but Percy was not required to be present, somewhat to his disappointment.

Mrs. Brown was now rather in a bad way, as these were the days before the passing of the Widows Pensions Act. She had no means of livelihood and there were debts to pay. To meet the difficulty she went out charring and found room in her already crowded home for a "gentleman lodger."

As might be expected, the lodger was rather an inconvenience, and once her debts were wiped out Mrs. Brown decided she could manage without the few shillings he paid her a week. He, however, was unwilling to go. He declared he could not find any other lodging and took no notice of her entreaties. A neighbour then told Mrs. Brown that she could "bring the law against him."

Therefore, one morning, she plucked up courage and went to the Police Court to ask advice, following the

practice of many of her neighbours who took all manner of complaints to the Bench. The magistrates explained to her that for this matter she had come to the wrong place. They said she should apply to the County Court, in a neighbouring district, and told her how to find it.

There are two quite different kinds of law courts in England. For cases of offence against the law of the land there are the Criminal Courts, of which the Petty Sessions or Police Court is the best-known example. But for meting out justice between two people, one of whom has a complaint against the other, there are the Civil Courts, and of these the County Court is the most familiar example. The name is misleading, as it suggests that there is only one such court for each county, whereas there are several. Here one person can sue another for breach of contract, for debt, for overcharging, and so on. The judge is a paid expert, and the expense of making use of the court is so slight that it is worth any one's while to do so.

Mrs. Brown took out a summons against her lodger on payment of two shillings, and she had finally to appear at the Court with him and put her case. When both sides had been heard the lodger was told that he must clear himself out of Mrs. Brown's home within a month. He very quickly found new lodgings. Percy regretted his going, as the lodger had often offered him cigarettes and had once given him three-pence to go to the Cinema.

Soon after this, and shortly after Percy had left school to take up a van boy's job, Mrs. Brown died. There was no one to look after the family. Percy's older brother had, however, already gone to a job in London, and his sister was "living in" as a domestic servant. The two younger boys went to an orphan



school which was a department of the local workhouse, and Percy continued to live in one room with his grandmother who had an Old Age Pension.

He now did pretty much as he liked. His duties as van boy were not exacting and he spent pleasant hours lolling against a sack at the back of the van reading cheap penny papers containing the most startling adventure stories. He also went occasionally to a cheap cinema. He began to think he would like adventures himself, but he had no idea how to set about getting them.

At the week-ends he spent a good deal of time with some of his friends, doing nothing in particular. One of them had a bicycle which he generously lent the others that they might learn to ride. They found it convenient to practise on a certain footpath where there was a notice making it clear that, according to a bye-law of the Urban District Council, cycling was forbidden. One day one of Percy's friends was confronted by a policeman who took his name and address. Later, the boy received a summons to appear at the Police Court. This caused quite a sensation and Percy and some of the others took a morning off in order to be present at the court and encourage the unfortunate offender.

Percy did not find the Police Court nearly so alarming when he sat in it as an ordinary member of the public. He was quite interested in the various cases that came before the magistrates. There were several motor cases: motorists were charged with leaving their cars at night without lights, with furious driving, or with driving without a licence. Usually the motorist appeared himself and made the best excuse he could, but in one case a solicitor appeared on his behalf. It is always allowable to employ a lawyer to plead one's

case, but for small offences it is not usually worth while. There was also a case of a man who was charged with being drunk and disorderly. He had been arrested by the police the evening before and had spent the night in the local police cells. He was put in the dock to hear his charge, as is customary with any one who has been detained by the police overnight.

When the offending cyclist appeared his friends sought to encourage him by a few well-chosen remarks, but they were sternly rebuked by a policeman and would have been turned out of the court if they had not immediately resumed silence. The offender pleaded guilty and was fined five shillings. "Can I have time to pay it?" he asked. The presiding magistrate said: "How much money have you in your pocket?" He had half a crown. "Pay that now," said the magistrate, "and another half-crown this day week."

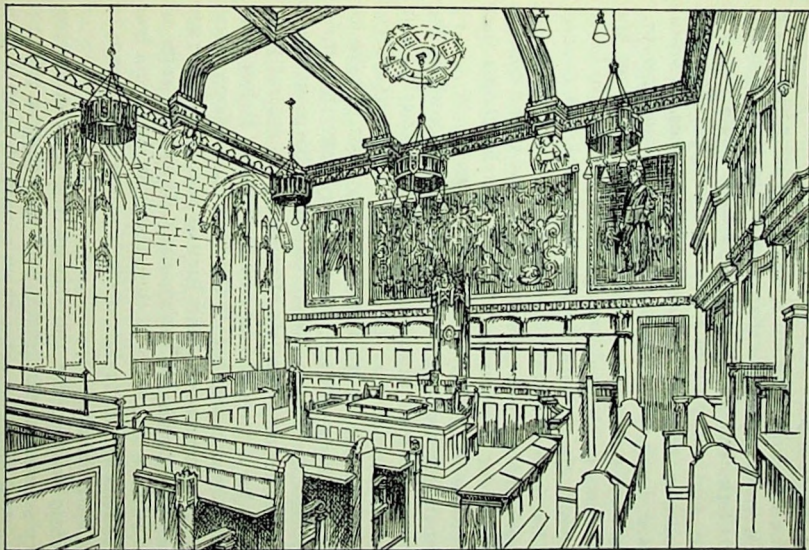
Later on, Percy lost his job and his place was taken by a younger boy, fresh from school. Being a van boy is necessarily a temporary job and leads to no promotion. It is therefore often described as a "blind alley" occupation.

While he was strolling about not knowing what to do with himself Percy met his mother's former lodger, who now gave him not only a cigarette but a drink. He also met one of the lodger's friends. The next day they sought him out and asked him if he would like to earn five pounds. Percy was much interested and by no means deterred when he found he was required to take part in a burglary. Being rather small he could conveniently help his two older friends by getting through a certain narrow window and opening the door for their entrance. It was a most sensational evening, and the ultimate failure was no slur on Percy,

who did exactly what he was told. They were arrested later in the evening on account of their suspicious behaviour. They were taken off to the Police Station, and afterwards removed in a "Black Maria" to the detention cells of a neighbouring prison, there to pass a few days in seclusion until next Petty Sessions. Then Percy appeared before the magistrates once again. The men pleaded "not guilty." After evidence had been heard all three were committed for trial at the Quarter Sessions, the offence being too serious for judgment at the Petty Sessions Court. This meant waiting nearly a month, and the men asked to be let out "on bail." By this they meant that they wished to be allowed to go home until the day of the trial, on condition that they could find someone who would bail them out. The person in question would have to go surety for a certain sum of money, perhaps ten pounds, which meant that he would be liable to pay this sum if the men failed to appear at the Quarter Sessions.

The presiding magistrate asked the police if they had any objection to the offenders being granted bail. As they had established addresses and were not notorious characters, it was granted.

Every county, as well as many a large town, has its Quarter Sessions; they are usually held in the County Town, often in the same building as the Council Offices. In London the corresponding court is the Old Bailey. Cases that require a jury are dealt with here, and even in certain minor cases a man has a right to a trial by jury at the more important court if he wishes for it. Magistrates from all over the county can attend Quarter Sessions and there are often as many as twenty of them on the Bench at once. In large towns, however, their place is taken by the Recorder, a paid



INTERIOR OF A COURT OF QUARTER SESSIONS



magistrate with special legal qualifications. In fact he is always a K.C. (King's Counsel). *Q.C. Queen's Counsel*

The appearance of the Court of Quarter Sessions is much more impressive than that of the inferior court. The Clerk who sits below the Bench wears wig and gown, and many other gentlemen so apparelled may be seen sitting on the foremost benches. (Nowadays you will also occasionally find a woman lawyer.) These are going to act as *Counsel* for some of the *Defendants* or charged persons. There will also be in the court the *Counsel for the Prosecution*. A counsel is a barrister who has undertaken to argue a case on one side or the other. Sometimes we say that a counsel is acting for the Crown, meaning that he claims that one of the King's laws has been broken.

On the right of the Bench is the jury box where the jurymen sit. As in the case of the Coroner's Court any householder may be called to serve on a jury. Before any case is tried the jurymen have to take an oath that they will act fairly. They take this, three at a time, holding a New Testament between them. An ordinary jury consists of twelve persons, but for a Grand Jury twenty-four are required. Before any case for trial comes before the Quarter Sessions it has to be submitted to a Grand Jury to discover if there are sufficient grounds for the charge. They hear some of the evidence and then, if they think fit, declare a *true bill*. This usually takes place in some other room in the Court House.

While waiting for the day of the trial to arrive, Percy's two burglar friends had consulted a solicitor and asked him to procure them a counsel, so that their case might be presented as strongly as possible.

Percy was rather frightened when he duly appeared at the Court House with his older friends, but they



seemed in no way disturbed and assured him that everything would be all right. When their names were called they all three entered the court and were ushered into the dock, an enclosure facing the row of magistrates. On their left was the jury and on their right the witness box.

The Clerk read the charge and asked them whether they pleaded "guilty" or "not guilty," whereupon the counsel who was conducting their case stood up and said: "I appear for the defendants, who plead "not guilty." The jury, having already been installed in the jury box, were then sworn in, but first of all their names were read out and the prisoners asked if they objected to any of them. Next, the Counsel for the Prosecution stood up and gave his view of the case, showing why he believed the defendants to be guilty, and in order to prove his points he called several witnesses. These included the policeman who had caught the offenders, and the owner of the stolen property. They went into the witness box in turn, took the oath, and answered the questions which the counsel put to them. Then the other counsel, the Counsel for the Defence, also asked them questions based on their evidence. This is called cross-examination. The Counsel for the Prosecution asked a few supplementary questions and then said: "That is the case for the prosecution."

It was now the turn of the Counsel for the Defence to state his case. He had no witnesses to call except the three defendants themselves, whom he put in turn into the witness box. The purpose of this was to ask them questions that would enable them to show their innocence by their replies. Afterwards, however, the Counsel for the Prosecution cross-examined them and then Percy was in great distress although he had been

well drilled as to what he had got to say. However, he was always unable to think of anything when he was dazed and frightened, as now, so that his answers were of little avail to either side.

The Counsel for the Prosecution had nothing more to say after this; so the Chairman of the magistrates summed up the case for the benefit of the jury. Then he ordered them to consider their verdict, basing it entirely on the evidence given by the witnesses and remembering that if there was any reasonable doubt the prisoners were to be given the benefit of it.

The jury considered the verdict in the box, without withdrawing to another room. When they were ready the Clerk addressed them:

"Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, have you considered your verdict and do you find the prisoners guilty or not guilty?"

Then the foreman had to reply (the jury have to choose a foreman, or spokesman):

"Guilty," he said.

The Chairman of the magistrates then called for the Police Officer in charge of the case and asked him what he knew of the defendants. (You will notice that their past history was not disclosed until the present charge against them was proved; a knowledge of their previous life might have influenced the jury one way or the other.) The policeman replied that there were no cases recorded against one man, one previous conviction against the other, and a previous conviction of eight years ago, against Percy. The magistrates conferred together and their Chairman finally announced that one man was to have six months with hard labour, but that the other man (the former lodger) and Percy were to be bound over "in their own recognizances" for two years and to report regularly

to a Probation Officer. This simply meant that they were on their honour to keep the laws, and if they failed within the two years the penalty for a second offence would be extra heavy.

Various alternatives were in the magistrates' minds when they considered what sentence they should pass on Percy. They might have *remanded* his case until the next Quarter Sessions and asked the Probation Officer to find out all about him in the meantime. To remand a case is to postpone it for some reason. The most usual reason for remanding a case is that the evidence so far collected is insufficient. While on remand the prisoner may be granted bail, or he may be detained in the remand cells of a prison, or in a special Remand Home.

Another alternative considered by the magistrates was to send Percy to a Borstal Institution. There are several of these in the country, and their purpose is to provide a regular, useful and disciplined life for boys or girls between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one. Only those who have committed serious offences are sent to them. Borstal Institutions attempt to capture something of the spirit of a good school. They are organized in "houses" with games, teams and prefects, and they have various entertainments. But the working day is a stiff one. It includes eight hours' manual labour as well as educational classes and gymnastics. Games and recreation chiefly occur at the week-end.

However, as we have seen, Percy was neither remanded nor sent to Borstal. He signed a document about his probation and found himself free to go home without any stigma of punishment attaching to his name. But first of all he made the acquaintance of the Probation Officer, a cheerful, friendly man who

undertook to find him a job. He proved a good friend, and Percy often went to see him quite apart from his obligation to report to him every month.

Percy's lodger-friend was placed under another Probation Officer who was similarly helpful. The ex-lodger began to drink rather less and never tried his hand at burglary again. He always, however, hoped to make his fortune by luck rather than hard work, and once, thinking he had a claim under a distant relative's will, he went to law about it. This meant attending the High Court of Justice (the "Law Courts") in London. It gave him a feeling of importance, and he afterwards sought out Percy and described to him the splendours and impressiveness of the Law Courts.

The High Court of Justice has three divisions. There is the King's Bench Division, in which important cases of a general kind are heard; there is the Chancery Division, in which cases relating to the guardianship of children and lunatics are heard; and there is the Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty Division, which deals with disputed wills (Probate), divorce, and certain cases connected with seafaring. From the King's Bench Division judges go "on circuit" into the country and hold *Assizes*. These are courts of greater importance than Quarter Sessions and they deal with serious cases either of a civil or criminal nature.

Percy's friend explained as much of this as he had understood. He did not, unfortunately, establish his claim to the legacy.

As to Percy's burglar friend who was sent to prison, Percy inquired of the Probation Officer as to what kind of life he was leading. It was rather a gloomy picture. Prisoners sentenced to a local prison (as distinct from a convict prison that receives only long-sentence cases) all undergo very much the same

routine wherever the prison may be. In fact the details of prison life throughout the country are arranged by the Prison Commissioners, a small committee appointed by the Home Secretary. Every prisoner inhabits a narrow cell, containing a board-bed, a stool, and a few necessary eating utensils. This is his home, and he is required to keep it spotlessly clean. For the first fortnight he is "in solitary confinement," which means that he works by himself alone in his cell and rarely sets eyes on other prisoners. Afterwards he is taken for some hours every day to work in the prison workshops "in association" with his fellow-prisoners. But this does not mean that he can talk. All conversation is forbidden and warders are always on the watch. Once a day the prisoners take exercise in the prison yard, walking in single file some yards apart, round a circular path, with a warder in the middle. Two or three times a week they go to chapel, where the warders have raised seats at the end of each pew. Under cover of the singing they sometimes manage to exchange a few friendly remarks. The harsh rule of silence is chiefly imposed to prevent plans of escape.

Prison food is carefully measured out and very plain. There are three meals a day. Of mental fare there is very little. At first a prisoner may have one educational book a fortnight from the prison library and later he is allowed a novel. He has only a slate on which to write. And it must be remembered that he spends many long hours confined alone in his cell even after the period of solitary confinement is concluded.

Unfortunately, Percy's burglar friend came out hardened rather than reformed. Because this quite often happens magistrates hesitate nowadays, much



more than formerly, before sending a man to prison. First offenders are nearly always put on probation, and even second offenders are often given another chance. In some prisons an attempt is being made to relax the hard discipline a little. Experiments are being tried in allowing conversation, and many prisons now have occasional concerts or debates or lectures.

Percy read of his friend in the newspapers recently. He was concerned in a desperate burglary case and was charged with manslaughter. The case was too serious for Quarter Sessions and came up before the Assizes. If it had occurred in London, it would have come before the Central Criminal Court (known as the "Old Bailey") which is the corresponding court in London. Percy's friend was found guilty; but he appealed to the Court of Criminal Appeal for a further hearing. This court also found him guilty and he was sentenced to hard labour for life in a convict prison. He is now at Princetown, where if he conducts himself well he may be released after about twenty years.

As for Percy, he still works for the firm in which he first got a job through the Probation Officer. He is married and has one son who he hopes will ultimately become a member of the police force.

#### QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON CHAPTER XI

##### **Pictures for your notebook**

A policeman; the Law Courts in London, or any local Court House; any illustrations of Borstal, or of a prison, that you can procure.

##### **Things to find out for yourself**

(For the answers to some of the following questions you will have to rely on getting information from other people.)

Where is your local Petty Sessions or Police Court?

How often does the court meet?

1. Is there a stipendiary magistrate, or is the work done by J.P.'s.
2. Find out from the local newspapers what cases have been dealt with lately in your town or district.
3. Mention any bye-laws made by your local council.
4. Where do your Quarter Sessions meet?
5. Is there a Recorder at your Quarter Sessions, or is the work done by the J.P.s?
6. Collect from the daily papers any items of interest from the various courts.
7. Make a list of the different courts in the country, and suggest the kind of cases that would come before each.

## Meaning of words

Defendant, plaintiff, inquest, "summary jurisdiction," indictable, "capital punishment."

## Things to think out for yourself

1. Give arguments for and against improving the prisons.
2. What do you think are the aims and objects of punishment, and how far do you think the usual penalties are successful?
3. Argue for or against the abolition of capital punishment.

## Games

1. Debate on any of the above subjects.
2. Act a scene in a Police Court.
3. Act a scene at a Quarter Sessions. With some preparation beforehand you can produce an interesting case. Those who act as jury need not know the story which you invent and they will give the verdict which they think right. They must agree unanimously or another jury will have to be sworn in.
4. Read, in parts, extracts from Galsworthy's *The Silver Box*, or *Justice*. There are court scenes in both, and a prison scene in the latter.

## Reference books

Most of the elementary books on Citizenship give some account of the Administration of the Law. Also to be recommended are: *His Majesty's Guests*, by "Warder" (an account of Prisons); *The Poor Man's Court of Justice*, by Cecil Chapman; and *Children's Courts*, by Clarke Hall.

## CHAPTER XII

HOW THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS CAME ABOUT, AND  
WHAT IT IS

A new method of settling quarrels between nations—What modern war is like—The League of Nations: a society—The two objects of the League—The Articles of the Covenant—U.S.A. and Russia—Geneva—The Secretariat—The International Labour Office—The Assembly—The Council—The Commissions—The Assembly again.

It is a most strange fact that although in all civilized countries men have long ago given up fighting as a means of settling their personal quarrels, considering violence to be both wicked and unsatisfactory, it is by no means certain that they have for ever turned their backs on warfare as a means of deciding quarrels between nations. We seem to be much more civilized as individuals than as nations. Look into your neighbour's house and you will not find a brace of pistols ready for use in case you should prove disagreeable; he prefers to rely on the police and the law courts. But go into the street and you see notices asking for recruits for the Army or Air Force, and farther on a newspaper poster announcing that the Navy is practising manœuvres. It certainly seems, sometimes, that we have more faith in our armaments than in the League of Nations. Perhaps the most exciting question in the world to-day is this: Is the world going to use the League of Nations, or will it continue to resort to war? Not only our own lives but probably the life of this civilization depends on the answer.

The League of Nations offers to do for countries of the world what courts of justice have done for

individual people. It is a new institution and an outcome of the Great War.

It must not be thought that the Great War began in August 1914, when Serbia offended Austria and the various countries of Europe flocked to one side or the other. There had been a kind of smouldering warfare before that. In fact the great nations of the world had been rather like so many savages eyeing each other with greed and suspicion as each hugged his own spoils and nervously fingered his weapons. Or as someone described it—the world had a permanent cold and the war was a cough that revealed it.

But the fight which followed was no simple hand to hand affair such as savages know. When the civilized world fights, it calls all the inventions of civilization to its aid. Every army is a masterpiece of organization and the weapons employed are marvels of mechanical invention. The individual soldier seldom saw the enemies he was destroying. He lost all hatred in the trenches, and on Christmas Day English and German soldiers cheerfully exchanged cigarettes and sausages. Yet the havoc wrought by both sides was quite without parallel in the history of the world, and even those who were left at home did not escape, now that the air was a scene of battle as well as the land and the sea.

Therefore, although, like other disasters such as influenza epidemics and general strikes, war, of course, brings out courage and kindness in many people; most of us now agree that it is too costly, too cruel, and too crazy for a civilized world.

Why is it costly? Because such vast armies and such expensive weapons are needed nowadays. The Great War was costing England about £4,000,000 a day towards the end, and the total cost to the whole world was about £70,000,000,000.

Why is it cruel? Because so many people are killed and injured, and in such horrible ways—by means of tanks, explosive bombs, and poison gas. Apart from civilians (the people at home) nearly ten million men of different countries were killed in the Great War and the number of all the wounded was over twenty million, which is equal to about half the population of England.

Why is it crazy? Because all countries are the worse off for war whether they win or lose. It takes so much money that it leaves them poorer, it takes their best men, it upsets their trade, and it leaves more ill-feeling behind than there was before.

Hard experience persuaded the countries of the world that it was in their own interests to join together in a society with rules as to national behaviour and new arrangements for deciding quarrels. They also saw they would gain by working together for the common good of all, instead of each going her own way.

And that is how the League of Nations came about. For this League is simply a society, with members, committees, and offices like any other society or club; but the important difference between it and most other societies is that the members are not so many separate people but different countries. And this fact means that it has to be organized differently from other societies, for when it has its annual meeting at Geneva, all the people from all the different countries obviously cannot come to Switzerland, so three "delegates" are sent in each case. In the same way, when the Council of the League was elected, certain countries were chosen for it, but one person represents the country in each case.

The League of Nations was planned by the Peace Conference that came after the war. There is always some kind of conference after a war, and it always



draws up a treaty between the countries that have been fighting. But never before has any peace treaty begun with a plan for a world society like this. It was perhaps mostly the idea of the man who was President of the United States at that time—Woodrow Wilson; but many important men from different countries helped to think it out, especially Lord Robert Cecil from England. (The strange thing is that although we call President Wilson the founder of the League, his country afterwards would not join; and she still does not belong, although she helps in many ways from the outside.)

The rules of this League, when they had been carefully invented, were called the Covenant, and each separate rule is called an Article.

The Covenant begins by saying that the two objects of the League are to help the nations to work together, and to make Peace in the world. If you think it out you will see how these two objects are mixed up with one another; for if the nations work together over such things as wireless, getting rid of diseases, finding work for the unemployed, they will not be so inclined to fight each other; and if they do fight, they cannot get on with these other things. Here are some of the Articles of the Covenant put in very simple language.

(1) All the members of the League are to watch out for a sign of war, and to tell the others if they see signs of a serious quarrel between any two countries. (*Article 11.*)

(2) If two countries do have a serious quarrel, they are not to begin to fight. They must try to settle things peaceably in one of the following ways: Either they must ask the Council to act as judges, or they must get some other outsiders to come and act as judges, or they must take the matter to the new International Court of Justice which the League has set up at The Hague, a town in Holland. They can choose which method they like, and they must not expect to get a verdict

before about six months. When the verdict is given, if they still want to fight the matter out, they must wait another three months. (*Articles 12 & 13, 14 & 15.*)

(By that time the quarrel would probably have fizzled out. You must remember that the Covenant was made by countries when they were still feeling somewhat warlike. It seemed to them it would be aiming too high to make members of the League promise that they would never fight each other again. They were afraid no one would join, so they agreed that settlement before judges, which they call "arbitration," must be tried first, and war could be used at the very last if everything else failed. This little loophole for war is often called "the gap.")

(3) If a country breaks her promise and begins fighting without trying arbitration first, she is to be punished by the other members of the League. They are to stop trading with her, not to let their people visit her, and if the Council asks them, they may have even to send an army or navy against her—until she gives in. (This kind of punishment is called "Sanctions.") (*Article 16.*)

(4) If a country that does not belong to the League quarrels with one that is a member, the non-member can have all the benefits of peaceful settlement just as if she were a member; but if she insists on fighting, sanctions will be put into force against her. (There are not many countries outside the League. The chief are the United States, Russia, Turkey, and Mexico.) (*Article 17.*)

(5) The League has nothing to do with strikes or civil wars, because they are the concern of the Government of the country where they occur. (*No Article states this, but it is understood.*)

(6) The members of the League must cut down their fighting forces because these help to cause wars. This is called "Disarmament," or "Reduction of Armaments." (*Article 8.*)

(7) The Colonies conquered from Germany and Turkey in the Great War are to belong to the League until they can govern themselves; and in the meantime the League is to put them in the care of some important and civilized country, who is said to have the "Mandate" over them. (Thus England has the Mandate over Palestine, and France over Syria.) (*Article 22.*)

(8) The League is to try and make things better for working people in all countries of the world. It is to see that natives

in Colonies are not unfairly treated. It is to put down slavery. It is to stop the opium trade. It is to try to improve the health of the world. (*Article 23.*)

(9) There are to be no secret treaties between the countries in the League. (*Article 18.*)

(10) Any country not in the League can, if it is self-governing, ask to join the League, and it will be made a member providing two-thirds of the other members agree. (*Article 1.*)

You can imagine that the countries only came to agree about these things after a very long argument. And, to begin with, some of them would not join the new society. The United States of America said she liked the idea of it, but did not want to be involved in European affairs—she preferred to stand alone. And Russia said that she had lately been converted to a new belief that as a sign of this she called herself the "Union of Soviet Republics"; and that her beliefs were so different and so much better than those of other countries, that she could not bring herself to mix with them. So there were two very strong countries not taking part.

Then in the course of argument it became clear that the characters and minds of those who were trying to agree were very different. France wanted everything so carefully planned out that the League would know, by looking up its rules, exactly what to do in any kind of difficulty. England said you could not foresee the future and therefore why not agree about general ideas and decide about the difficulty when it happened? Germany, who was on the defeated side and had to give up nearly all her armaments and pay an enormous sum of money in "reparations," said that she only did this because she was forced to do it; and how could she trust the others when they promised that they were going to reduce their armaments in like manner?

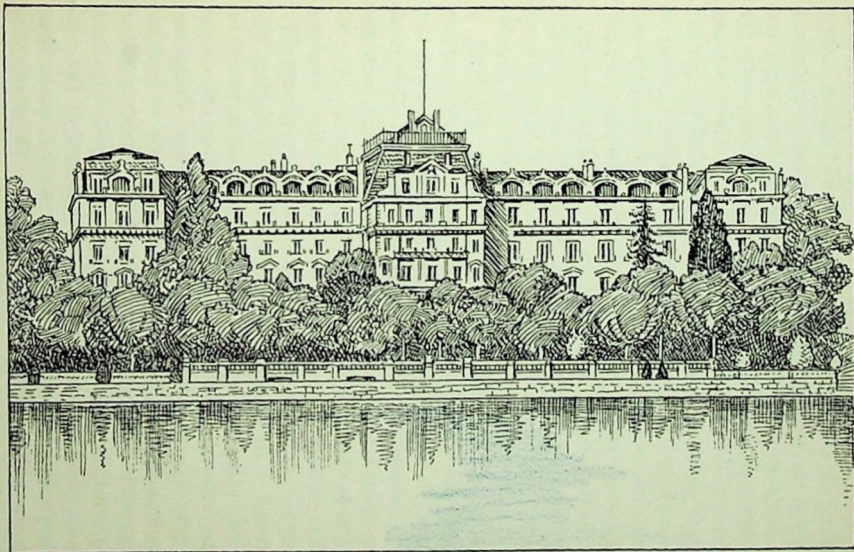
And, of course, they all wanted to be on the Council.

In spite of all difficulties, however, the League was formed. The Swiss city of Geneva was chosen as its headquarters, and there any visitor can see its offices and its staff just as the offices and servants of the British Government can be seen in Whitehall.

The chief building belonging to the League, at present, is the "Palace of the Nations," or to give it its business name, the Secretariat. Walking along by the side of the blue-green lake, around one end of which Geneva is built, you find a wall on your left and, in the middle, a stone, bearing the following inscription:

A LA MÉMOIRE DE  
WOODROW WILSON  
PRÉSIDENT DES ÉTATS-UNIS  
FONDATEUR DE LA SOCIÉTÉ DES NATIONS.

Beyond the wall is a large and splendid building that was once one of the finest hotels in Geneva. It is now the Secretariat. Inside you will find a number of different offices and a great variety of people. In different parts of the building you will find different business of the League receiving attention. For instance there is a "Mandates Department," a "Health Section," and an "Armaments Department." The head of the Secretariat is the Secretary-General, an Englishman, Sir Eric Drummond; he was chosen for the post when the League was first set up. But there are not very many others of his countrymen working there, for the Secretariat must, as far as possible, include people from all the countries in the League; in fact, many countries have been very particular about having a just share of the posts there, and it has been exceedingly difficult to divide them up fairly. The Secretariat has been called an "International Civil Service"—such a thing never existed before our day.



"THE PALACE OF THE NATIONS" (LEAGUE OF NATIONS SECRETARIAT)



Not far from the Secretariat is the only other League building in Geneva—the International Labour Office. It might seem to be the Secretariat over again, for here also are a number of offices and people from different countries of the world working in them. But the difference lies in the work they do. Here all the business is to do with the wage-earners of the world, the number of hours they work, their wages, the age at which children can work, work that is unhealthy and dangerous. It is really more like a twin sister to the League than a part of the League—as will be seen later on. The building is a new one, especially built for the purpose, and it has been furnished by the gifts of different countries. There are wooden doors given by Canada and Australia, chairs given by England, a stained-glass window from Germany, a picture from Finland, a carpet from Greece, and so on. And not only Governments but groups of workers also have given presents. For instance, the British seamen gave a fountain for the courtyard.

More about the work of the League that is done through this office will be found in the next chapter.

Should you happen to be in Geneva during the month of September you would also be able to see an annual meeting of the League, to which every one of the fifty-five member-countries sends three delegates. It is called the "Assembly." As every delegation brings with it a number of substitutes, assistants, and secretaries, and as the chief newspapers of every country send reporters to give an account of the proceedings, Geneva is for these four weeks, more than ever, a babel of different tongues. It does then appear to be what it is sometimes now called—"the political capital of the world." Moreover, as it is customary now for a country to send her Prime

Minister or Foreign Secretary as chief delegate, some of the most distinguished people of the world are staying in the city and excited crowds and camera men are always on the watch for them. The various national flags that fly from the windows of all the chief hotels add to the general effect.

You would no doubt be surprised to find that the Assembly takes place in a hall that seems quite unworthy of the purpose it serves. But this is merely temporary accommodation. Next to the Secretariat is a great tract of ground belonging to the League, and here in the course of the next few years a magnificent new building will arise to hold the Assemblies of the future.

The meetings of the Assembly are open to as many of the public as can be packed into the gallery that runs round three sides of the present hall, and here you can get a good view of the League at work. If you should be so fortunate as to be here for the first session of the Assembly you will witness the election of the President.

Down below you, sitting in rows, at what are rather like school desks, you see the delegates. You look right down on to the tops of their heads, but as they move about or look up you can see how different the faces are, though they all wear the same kind of clothes. Even the delegates from Ethiopia now wear ordinary black coats and trousers, although when they first came they wore black cloaks and baggy trousers of white silk. However, they cannot change their coal-black faces or black woolly hair, and these are a great contrast to the fair complexions and light hair of the lady and gentleman from Denmark who sit not far away. (Only a few of the countries have a woman among their three delegates; but Denmark, a

country that was among the first to allow women the vote, has sent a woman delegate since the first Assembly.) Every country has its appointed place, and to prevent jealousy they sit in alphabetical order, for it is very important to make every one as equal as possible in the League.

If you have good sight, you will be able to read the names of some of the countries on the delegates' desks. The names are all in French. As far as possible everything in the League is said and done in both French and English; as these are supposed to be the two best-known languages, but when only one language is used it is French, for that has been for a long time the language chiefly used between one Government and another.<sup>1</sup>

You will notice how very friendly all the delegates are. A good deal of smiling and bowing and hand-shaking is going on. This meeting has not yet begun; the delegates are still coming in.

So beaming they are, so apparently delighted to see one another, that it is difficult to believe that twelve years ago many of the countries they represent were at war.

At the end of the hall, facing you (that is if you are in the back, and not the side gallery), is a large platform, and in the middle of it a chair that may remind you of the Speaker's Chair in the English Parliament, except that it is less magnificent. The canopy over it which has an important appearance is only there to prevent an echo and to enable you to hear what the President says—for this is where he sits. Behind him

<sup>1</sup> An interesting new arrangement is now being used at Geneva. Interpreters whisper their translations into a microphone as a speech is made. The microphone is connected with earphones worn by members of the audience, who can plug in for English, Spanish, Italian, or whatever language they require.

there are seats for Members of the Secretariat, next to him on one side is a place for the Chief Interpreter, and on the other for the Secretary-General. In front of the platform is a little reading-desk, called the "Tribune," where delegates come to make their speeches. There are seats for other interpreters close by this.

Presently the bell rings and proceedings begin. The President of the League Council (the members of the Council take it in turn to hold this position) is sitting in the chair under the canopy. "Silence!" he calls in French and the Chief Interpreter says the word in English. Then he makes a little speech telling the delegates that they have to elect a President for this Assembly. He himself is only filling the position until the election is over. The speech is translated from French into English, or if it was first said in English, it is said over again in French. The delegates sometimes talk during the translations, and the President has to call out "Silence!" Probably most of them understood the speech the first time, and do not want to listen to it again.

Then the election takes place. Someone on the platform makes a roll-call of each country, using the French names, and as his country is called, the chief of the three delegates from each country walks up to the platform and puts a piece of paper in a box on the Tribune. The paper, of course, bears the name of the delegate for whom his country has decided to vote. When all have done this the papers are counted, and the delegate who is elected is announced to be President of the Assembly for this year.

The delegate so chosen then walks up to the platform, amid general applause, takes his place in the President's chair, and makes a short speech. When

this has been translated, the meeting is over and the delegates are ready to get on with their important business when they next meet.

For the first week of the Assembly there are what are called "Plenary" meetings (that is, meetings for all the delegates) every morning and afternoon. After that the Assembly divides itself up into six committees, and the committees meet in rooms at the Secretariat and talk over special business that has been given them. Then, towards the end of September, there are "Plenary" meetings again, and a delegate chosen as the "reporter" of a committee announces to the whole Assembly what the committee has decided about the business entrusted to it.

What is the whole business with which the Assembly has to deal? The answer is very simple. It has to consider and give an opinion on all the work of the League for the past year, and secondly, it has to decide on what the League ought to be doing next. But as the Assembly in the ordinary way only meets once a year for a month, who is doing the work of the League during the other eleven months, and what exactly is being done?

First of all, there is the Council, which in some respects is like a Cabinet of the League, just as the Assembly is like its Parliament. But you can imagine that if Parliament only met for a month once a year, the Cabinet would have to do a great many things quite on its own responsibility. And the Council of the League does a great deal on its own responsibility. It consists of fourteen men, one from each of the five Great Powers in the League—England, France, Germany, Italy and Japan (the U.S.A. and Russia are also Great Powers, but, as said, they do not belong to the League yet), and nine others chosen by



the Assembly. The meetings are held at least three times a year, and like Cabinet meetings they are more free and informal than the big Assembly meetings; but unlike Cabinet meetings they are not usually secret. The Council overlooks the work of various bands of people who have been appointed to see after such things as diseases, opium smuggling, slavery, and mandates. It has to think over suggestions that it would like to put before the Assembly. And if a danger of war arises somewhere in the world it has to hold a special meeting in order to try to stop it. There will be more about this last duty of the Council in the next chapter.

The bands of people mentioned above are called the Opium and Dangerous Drugs Commission, the Slavery Commission and the Mandates Commission (and there are several others). Commission is only another name for committee, but you must not confuse these committees with the committees into which, for the sake of convenience, each Assembly divides itself. For these permanent commissions consist of quite different people. They are not usually delegates to the Assembly, but people with special knowledge of the subject with which they have to deal. The League picks them out from anywhere in the world and asks them to help—and they are servants of the League before anything else.

The Assembly committees are rather like the parliamentary committees that deal with Bills that are going through Parliament, and the special committees of expert people are rather like Royal Commissions.

If you stay long enough in Geneva you may come across a meeting of one of these special commissions or committees one day, and you may hear stories of slave trading (if it is the Slavery Commission) or of

opium smuggling (if it is the Opium Commission) or a discussion as to whether a mandate is being carried out for the real good of the natives (if it is a Mandate Commission).

But if you only go to Assembly meetings you will find plenty to interest you.

For instance, if you had been there in September 1924, you would have heard someone propose that all countries should make it as easy and cheap as possible for schoolboys and schoolgirls, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, to visit Geneva. This was a simple suggestion and was easily passed; but suggestions about such matters as disarmament bring up all kinds of difficulties and agreement is not so easily reached.

Sometimes a delegate will criticize the Council. For instance, in March 1926, when a special Assembly had been called to vote on the question as to whether Germany should be accepted as a member, and the vote could not be taken owing to problems concerning the Council, Prince Arfa of Persia got up (wearing his little grey cap) and said: "I regret that the Council sometimes, at critical moments, neglects to consult or seek help from the Assembly. We have come long distances to admit Germany to the League. We have not been permitted to do so on account of difficulties which have arisen over the Council."

At other times a delegate will thank the League for the help his country has received from it, as when Count Bethlen, Prime Minister of Hungary, made a most grateful speech, saying that the League had saved his country from ruin by arranging a loan of money for it.

This sort of thing perhaps suggests to other countries that they might ask the help of the League. In September 1929, the delegate for Bolivia in South

America said he would be glad if the League would give advice and help over his country's drains.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON CHAPTER XII

Pictures for your notebook

Illustrations of some early war and the Great War, and of early and modern weapons. Pictures of the Palace of the Nations, an Assembly meeting, a Council meeting. (You will find all these in a little booklet called *Organizing Peace*, price twopence, to be got from the League of Nations Union, 15 Grosvenor Crescent, London, S.W.1.: or you may also find them in the newspapers at the time of the meetings.) From the newspapers at the beginning of September, you could also get photographs of some of the delegates.

Things to find out for yourself

Clues

1. How much is Great Britain's War Debt, and how much interest do we have to pay every year?

Whitaker's *Almanack*.

2. How much does the League cost every year?

Whitaker's *Almanack*. Books about the League of Nations.

3. What does this country pay each year towards the cost of the League?

Whitaker's *Almanack*. Books about the League of Nations.

4. Make a list of the things that the League is supposed to do.

Books about the League of Nations.

5. What countries are not in the League?

Books about the League of Nations.

6. Trace a map of the world, filling in in black the countries that are not in the League and shading those that are "Mandated territories."

Books about the League of Nations.

7. What are the fourteen countries on the Council at present?

Watch the newspapers for a Council meeting.

8. Who were the British delegates to the League in any particular year?

Newspapers, etc.

9. Find out anything you can about the following people: President Wilson, Lord Robert Cecil, Dr. Nansen.

**Meaning of words**

Armaments, arbitration, co-operation, delegate, covenant, mandate, plenipotentiary (a word by which delegates are sometimes called—it has a special meaning), plenary session.

**Things to think out for yourself**

1. About 160,000 soldiers marching four abreast could pass by your school in twenty-four hours. If all the men of different countries who were killed in the Great War (about 9,000,000) marched past, how long would they take?

2. How many people will your school hall hold? (any other hall will do as well). How many times over could you fill it to take in all the 20,000,000 men who were wounded in the Great War?

3. Supposing the Government decided to divide one day's cost of the war among all the people of Great Britain, how much money should we each get?

4. Imagine a quarrel between Italy and Russia. How ought it to be settled?

5. Do you think armaments are a cause of war?

6. Can you think of any reasons why Geneva is a suitable place for the League's headquarters?

7. Invent an argument between an Englishman and an American as to whether the U.S.A. ought to join the League.

**A Game**

Act an Assembly of the League of Nations something like this:

*Scene i.* The Election of the President.

*Scene ii.* A Plenary Session of the Assembly. Various delegates say what they think about the League and what more it ought to do.

*Scene iii.* The Assembly is divided into six committees and each has a meeting in turn and discusses one of the subjects given to it, e.g.:

1st Committee (Legal questions): Should the Covenant be amended?

2nd Committee (Technical questions): How can travelling be made easier?

3rd Committee (Disarmament): Suggestions for reductions of Armaments.

4th Committee (The Budget of the League): Does the League cost too much?

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5th Committee (Social and Humanitarian questions):  
What can be done about Opium?

6th Committee (Political questions): What can be done  
to stop Slavery?

*Scene iv.* A Plenary Session of the Assembly at which "a reporter" from each Assembly committee announces what his committee has decided. A discussion follows.

(These last two scenes are more difficult than the first, so that it may be better only to do the first two.)

### Reference books

An up-to-date and descriptive list of books on the League of Nations suitable for use in schools may be had on application to the League of Nations Union, 15 Grosvenor Crescent, S.W. 1. Current news of the League will be found in the Union's monthly publication, *Headway*, price threepence.

Among some of the simple and inexpensive accounts of the League and its work are:

*A Little Book of the League of Nations* (1927), B. Bradfield (Geneva Correspondent for the *Children's Newspaper*), King and Son, 2s.

*The United Word* (1929), Sherman and Spaul.

*The Story of the League of Nations*, K. Innes. Hogarth Press, 1s. 6d.

*How the League of Nations Works*, K. Innes. Hogarth Press, 1s. 6d.



## CHAPTER XIII

## WHAT THE LEAGUE IS DOING

A story of Greece and Bulgaria in 1925—Disarmament—Tariffs—Slavery—A Japanese match factory, a Chinese silk factory, and an Indian coal mine—Typhus, rats, and an office at Singapore—Opium.

IN the preceding chapter something has been said as to how the League came about, what its rules are, and what you can see of it, if you visit Geneva. We have watched this society of nations set up and we have gone—in imagination—to its annual meeting, and heard a great deal of talk. People often say that "talking is not doing." It is not quite true in the case of the League, for the more the nations talk to one another, the more they are likely to understand one another. All the same it would not be a very satisfactory League if it did nothing else but talk. In this chapter we will find out what the League is doing, whether it has stopped any wars, whether it has helped poor working people, whether it has begun to fight such enemies of humanity as disease and dangerous drugs, and whether it is making the countries gradually give up their armaments.

On 19 October, 1925, you would have seen some exciting events if you had been at a certain place on the frontier between Greece and Bulgaria. It is difficult, perhaps, for people in England to realize what a frontier means. If Great Britain were surrounded by other countries instead of by the sea, we should probably have bands of soldiers stationed at various places along our boundaries, especially where a river or a road passed through to the country next door.

Imagine a mountainous place where Greece joins

Bulgaria. (You can roughly find it on the map, if you can discover where the river Struma crosses the frontier.) A mountain road winding among the heights leads from one country into the other. One Monday afternoon, in October 1924, two sentries were talking near the invisible boundary. They were in different uniforms, for one was a Greek and the other a Bulgarian. They were guarding their own side of the frontier. It was usually quite a boring job and they always talked to each other, and sometimes tried to pass the time with gambling games. Along the road, in the Greek direction, you could have seen rough huts and other soldiers moving about; and if you had gone along the road towards Bulgaria, you would have found similar huts with Bulgarian soldiers. These were the outposts whence the sentries would be relieved later.

The sentries were usually on quite friendly terms, but on this particular afternoon these two men began to quarrel. Some people say that they had been gambling, and one owed the other some money. No one knows quite what it was about. But suddenly in that lonely place a rifle shot echoed among the mountains, and when the soldiers from both directions came running towards the spot, they found the Greek soldier lying dead on the roadside. All at once there was commotion where there had been silence. Both sides began firing at each other, and many of the Bulgarians made their way along the road into Greek territory. Peasants who lived not far away, began spreading the news and starting rumours. Presently a Greek officer appeared with a white handkerchief tied to his rifle. He wanted to make a truce before anything worse happened. But in the excitement and commotion he was killed—very likely by mistake.

In the meantime, like lightning, the news had been sent to the Governments of the two countries, and in both Athens and Sofia an urgent Cabinet meeting was hurriedly called.

"We suggest a committee to find out about this," hurriedly wired the Bulgarian Government to the Greek.

"Some of your soldiers have crossed into our country and killed our people. We demand that you apologize and make payment for what has happened," replied the Greek Government. And then a message came to the Greek Government that a battalion of Bulgarian soldiers was attacking a place on the Greek side of the frontier. This afterwards proved to be a false rumour, but the thought of Bulgarian soldiers marching into their Greece was alarming. The Greeks thought there was no time to make sure that the message was true, so they definitely ordered the invasion of Bulgaria and decided that the Bulgarian town of Petritch should be attacked. They planned a pitched battle for the next Saturday morning.

On Thursday the Greek army was marching over the frontier into Bulgaria. The same day the Bulgarian Government sent a telegram to the Secretary-General at Geneva asking that a Council Meeting should be called immediately, and saying that Bulgaria would trust to the Council to stop the trouble, and would not fight against the Greek soldiers that were marching into her country.

Sir Eric Drummond received the telegram about seven o'clock on Friday morning, and in great haste he sent another telegram to M. Briand, the French Foreign Secretary, who was President of the Council at the time. A Council meeting was then arranged for the next Monday, and in the meantime M. Briand

sent telegrams to the Greek and Bulgarian Governments advising them not to do anything rash, and reminding them of their promises under the Covenant. The Greek Government considered this message, and sent fresh orders to the army that was now in Bulgaria, telling them that the pitched battle against Petritch was postponed.

On Monday, just a week after the quarrel of the two sentries, the Council met in Paris. The delegate from Sweden had to come by aeroplane to be there in time. A Greek and a Bulgarian delegate were present as well. These two sat on one side of the table, and the Council faced them.

M. Briand asked the Bulgarian and the Greek if their countries had now stopped invading each other. "We never invaded Greece at all," said the Bulgarian. "We will stop invading Bulgaria when Bulgaria stops invading us," said the Greek.

The Council said that both countries must make certain that all their soldiers were in their right country within sixty hours and all signs of war were at an end. This was done, and some French, British, and Italian officers went to the place where the trouble was and, acting as the representatives of the League of Nations, helped to see that the orders of the Council were carried out. On Wednesday at midday a telegram came to the Council from these officers saying that calm reigned once more on the frontier.

The discussions went on at daily meetings of the Council until it was finally agreed that Greece, as she had indeed invaded Bulgaria, should pay Bulgaria £40,000 by way of reparations.

This is the most exciting adventure that the League has so far had in stopping a war; but it is by no means the only one. In the first ten years of its existence the

League has been useful in nearly twenty different national quarrels. In some cases it seems almost certain that war would have broken out if, as in the old days, there had been no League. In other cases the quarrel might have been patched up somehow without the League, but the patch would not have been a good one.

Another thing to remember is that these quarrels need not always be brought before the Council. Countries that belong to the League are free to find other umpires instead if they like. Moreover, when their quarrel is over the meaning of some treaty (or about any "legal" matter), they usually go to the International Court of Justice which the League has set up at The Hague; there the matter will go before nine judges chosen out of the whole world. People used to say that if one of these judges had to try a case in which his own country was taking part, he would never give judgment against it, even if he knew it to be in the wrong. But things have not turned out like this at all.

The League has made a good start, but it began its work when the world was worn out with fighting. So far it has not had to deal with a serious quarrel between any of the more important countries. When a dispute of this kind comes about (and it is sure to happen some day) will the big countries keep their promises under the Covenant? Will they bring their trouble before the Council like Greece and Bulgaria? No one can say. It depends on whether the people of the world want the League's way to be the new way.

"Prevention is better than cure," people say, and if the League can prevent these quarrels coming about, that is better than having to pacify two angry countries who want to fly to war. There are several ways in



which the League is trying to avoid ill-feeling among the Nations. One is by working for "disarmament"—the gradual cutting down of all the things and all the people with which a nation fights. Every day in nearly every country in the world, soldiers are learning to drill and shoot and use bayonets. Every now and then some country launches a new battleship or submarine, and in nearly every country there are secret laboratories where new kinds of poison gases are being made. All this is *in case*, in spite of the League, a war should break out.

But disarmament has turned out to be a tremendous difficulty. The countries say: "We cannot begin to disarm until we feel sure that the other members of the League will keep their Covenant promises not to fight." And the League says: "We cannot be sure that the countries will not fight, so long as they are so carefully prepared for war."

However, the League Assembly, a few years ago, decided to arrange a world conference to which every country, whether in the League or not, should be invited, and that this conference should decide what could be done about disarmament. In the meantime, the League arranged committees to think out suggestions for the conference, and America brought about two Naval Conferences that were attended by countries with big navies. But the Naval Conferences could not come to any important agreement, and the committees have been meeting for years and racking their brains for a plan that will satisfy every one. The trouble is that as no country feels it is safe to reduce her armaments, she will only agree to make exactly the same reduction as another country. England says to America: "I will build one battleship less next year, if you will do the same." But America replies: "I am quite

willing to do the same as you within reason, but my battleships are smaller than yours, so it will not work out fairly." And France says: "Well, of course, I am not so interested in a navy as an army, and although I am willing to think about making my army a little smaller, to match your navies, you must not count all my ordinary men as part of the army, although they do all have to serve as soldiers for one year when they are young men." To which England and America reply: "But that is not fair." And Germany keeps saying: "When you forced me to destroy my battleships and reduce my army to a tiny force at the end of the war, you all promised that you were going to do the same. You have not kept your word."

Another cause of ill-feeling between countries is trade. Here every country is out for itself, and dislikes foreign goods being sold to its people; although in these days no country can supply all its own needs.

If you went travelling through Europe, every time you came to a frontier, whether you were in a car or in a train, you would be stopped by the "Customs" men who would rummage through your trunks and bags to see if you had got anything that had to be taxed. They would suspect you of smuggling something into their country without paying the tax, or "tariff," or "duty" (to give it its different names). In this way France tries to keep out English cigarettes, England tries to keep out German cameras, America and England try to keep out each other's motor cars. Every country has a tremendous list of things that must not come in without paying a tax. Thus they "protect" their own makers of these things and add a little money to their treasuries.

Whether these tariffs should be done away with

altogether is a big question, but since the war they have been put on many more things than ever before, and when the League called a special conference of experts to look into these matters, they said very definitely that the tariffs were too big everywhere, that they were interfering with trade and therefore causing unemployment and poverty; as well as making for ill-feeling.

Someone once said that one street lamp was worth more than six policemen. It is certainly true that if we were unable to light our big cities, we should need many more policemen to patrol the streets at night.

The work of many of the League's committees is rather like the usefulness of street lamps; for by their inquiries and the reports they make, they light up dark places of the world and show up things that most of us never knew were there.

Some people seem to think that the League ought to have appointed a group of men to act as World Rulers; and that these should have made laws that the whole world had to obey, and that there should be an international police force to see that no one failed to keep them. But although this may seem a simple way of putting the world to rights, there is one serious drawback to it—no country would have joined the League under such conditions, and so there would have been no League at all.

The League, as we have seen, is not a World Government, but a society that the countries of the world may join, and one of the things this society means to do is to get behind the scenes and tell us what is there.

So careful are the League's committees to let us see things exactly as they are, that the light they put

on is more like a searchlight than a street lamp. In the remainder of this chapter we will imagine powerful searchlights being operated from Geneva, and we shall see what they show up.

The first scene is in Abyssinia, sometimes called Ethiopia, which is perhaps one of the most interesting countries in the world. It is a high table-land with great mountains rising from it. It has a long and exciting history, going back to Old Testament times. It was here that the Queen of Sheba reigned and from here that she set out once, so it is said, nearly three thousand years ago, to visit King Solomon, with presents of gold and spice and precious stones. Nowadays the country is ruled by several different Kings. The chief of these, a fairly young man, is anxious for his country to show up well in the world, but he is not very powerful.

It is early morning in an Abyssinian village among the mountains. Dawn is just breaking and showing up the little huts with their roofs of thatch. Presently some of the shadows in the half-light begin to move. Something is approaching from among the trees beyond the huts. They must be people. They creep nearer the huts. Presently a cry is heard, a shot is fired, and then there are more and more shots and the frightened scream of women. A terrible commotion is going on in and around the huts, and as the daylight increases a band of men rushes back into the wood from whence they came, dragging prisoners with them, and leaving burning homes and dead bodies behind.

This is a slave-raid, something forbidden by the law of Abyssinia, and condemned by the civilized world, but something that quite often happens.

Later, in the glaring light and heat of midday, you can see how successful the Slave-Raiders are. Along

a long and dusty road a strange procession comes. Hundreds and hundreds of men are marching, chained together, with their captors riding on mules beside them, and dragging alongside as best they can are the women and children. Some of them have got a little food and drink with them, others have none and stumble from faintness and from a maddening thirst. Some drop dead or dying on the way. The destination of the rest is the slave market in a distant town.

Slave-trading, as well as slave-raiding, is against the law of Abyssinia, and any one who buys and sells slaves is supposed to be put to death. But, as you can see, the law is not yet successfully enforced.

The *owning* of slaves, however, is not only allowed, but is as common in Abyssinia as the employment of servants and workers in our country. Everybody has slaves, and if an Abyssinian wants to give you a present, he will very likely send you a slave girl or slave boy who he thinks would be useful to you. The child is then your property and must do all you want. There are probably more slaves than free people in the chief towns of Abyssinia. As you go through the streets you notice how many women can be seen carrying huge earthenware jars of water on their backs, bending forward into what looks like a very difficult position. They are slaves, and so are the men and women driving the cattle to market, and those ploughing the fields outside the town, and the girls who follow the rich Abyssinian ladies when they ride out on their mules to take the air, and so is the little black boy who runs beside a chief, carrying his master's gun in a bright satin case over his shoulder.

The League of Nations Assembly first began to discuss Slavery in 1924, and they set up a committee to take up the question. When this committee, two



years later, told the Assembly what they had discovered, an agreement or Convention was made and all the countries in the League were asked to sign. The Convention declares that it is wrong for human beings to be owned by other people, and any country that signs it is pledged to do all she can to get rid of slave-owning, slave-trading and slave-raiding. The Convention was altered a little in 1927, and forty-seven countries have now signed.

There are not very many countries where slavery exists to-day; but there are a great many where the workpeople are so poor, so badly treated, and so uneducated, that it sometimes seems as if they are even more to be pitied than the slaves themselves. After all, it usually pays a master to keep his slaves healthy and strong, but where there are plenty of workpeople to be had, an employer has no special interest in those he hires, and if they gradually find the work too much for them, he can replace them with others.

Mention has already been made of the International Labour Office at Geneva, and of the League's efforts at improving the conditions of the workers. So important is this part of the League's work, that it is carried on quite separately. It might almost be described as another society, for countries may join the International Labour Organization without joining the League. The I.L.O. (as it is usually called) has its own Covenant (known as the Charter), its own offices, its own Assembly (known as the Annual Conference), and its own Council (known as the Governing Body). To the Conference, which meets in May or June, come four delegates from each country—one prominent employer, one well-known trade-union leader, and two people interested in labour questions appointed by the

Government. Both the Conference and the Governing Body (consisting of the chief industrial countries of the world and others) talk about such things as—how many hours a week people should work, how often they should have holidays, what trades are dangerous and how they can be made safe, how the worker can be protected from dangerous machinery, the problem of unemployment, what work is unfit for women, at what age children should be allowed to go to work, what work they should be allowed to do, and for how many hours a day they should be employed. Agreements or "Conventions" are made about these things, and the delegates are asked to sign these, and then to have them carried out in their own countries. But some countries are so behindhand that they can only go half-way towards doing what a Convention promises. For instance, the I.L.O. has agreed that children must not go to work until they are fourteen; but India and Japan would not sign the Convention as it stood; and the age for them had to be twelve. Even so it has not been altogether kept.

The I.L.O. has its committees just like the League; and they are continually lighting up things of which most people had never heard. Here are some of the things that the I.L.O. searchlight has shown.

We are in a match factory in Japan. Men and boys are standing round a table mixing a glue-like mixture which is to make the heads of matches. Now and then there is a burst of flame, leaving a white mist behind it. The atmosphere is horrible and suffocating. The workers look ill, for the particular phosphorus which they are using is the white poisonous kind and will kill many of those who work with it. (The I.L.O. has agreed that only red phosphorus shall be used.)

We are now in a small silk factory in China. There

is a long bench with women sitting on one side and children standing on the other. Every child has a basin to which boiling water and steam are laid on, and there they stand for twelve hours a day stirring the silk cocoons and often scalding their hands. The atmosphere is thick with steam and every one is dripping with perspiration. Some of the children are only seven years old, and younger children and babies have been brought by their mothers, and are lying in odd corners of the ramshackle place.

Many of the Chinese factories work day and night, with a change of workers every twelve hours. Going for a walk before breakfast you would see, in certain streets of the big cities, numbers of small children sleepily making their way home to bed. But worse off than these are the little boys in the rug factories who are serving a seven-year apprenticeship. They live in the factories for all this time, earning nothing but their food and the use of a few bedclothes that they pull out in the workroom at night. Most of them leave their homes in the country at the age of seven.

Now we come to a coal mine—but not an English coal mine, although it is much the same as regards its darkness, its heat, and the damp which drips here and there from the rough-hewn walls. But in England no woman has been allowed to work in a coal mine for nearly one hundred years, and here we find that the worker who is carrying a great basket of coal along the low, dark passage is a woman. In these Indian mines over fifty thousand women are at work, either from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., or from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. The men hew out the coal and the women carry it to the trucks. The air is often bad and the mines are not so well made as those in England. Explosions quite often happen.

One of the most important committees of the League of Nations is the Health Committee; and a large part of the Secretariat is given up to its offices. A great number of distinguished doctors from many different countries are members of this committee, and a great many others are employed by it to go into different countries of the world, either to find out the cause of some disease, or to try to cure it. This work of the League of Nations may be described as making war—not on people, but on germs. And the germs are a difficult enemy to encounter, for being so small they are not easily discovered, and they increase in numbers many times more quickly than a human army can bring up recruits. Here are two war pictures taken from the permanent war between the League and the Microbe. The searchlight of the Health Committee shows them up.

The scene is a cottage in a little village in Poland in 1920. Several people, most strangely dressed, are busy at some mysterious work. Great boots and baggy trousers cover the whole of their legs, great hoods with eye-pieces cover their faces, and they wear rubber gloves on their hands. One is moving the furniture about, another is sweeping the floor, another is squirting every inch of the house with a great syringe.

They are fighting the typhus germ and preventing a second Black Death from sweeping over Europe. Hundreds of other people (many of whom have come hurrying to help from their different countries, without waiting for the League to call them) are doing the same in hundreds of other homes.

The next scene is a rice storehouse in the Far East. Sacks and sacks of the grain are piled in a great building that stands on a platform well above the ground, so that the rats shall not creep in. Men have been busy

all day bringing in the sacks from a ship that stands at anchor at the quayside near by.

Now it is night. The doors are shut. The piles of sacks stand silently in the dark. And then there is a slight noise—and out of unexpected corners the rats come scuttling. They always seem to get the better of the people who try to keep them away. But to-night they make a discovery. There are new holes in the storehouse floor. They lead into pipes. Down there go the rats and in the bends and turns they find excellent nesting places, much more comfortable and much safer than between the sacks of rice. They decide to make their homes in the pipes. One day the entrances to the pipes will be suddenly closed, and from the other ends the rats will be drowned or gassed.

This is a plan put forward by Dr. Norman White, who was sent by the Health Committee to find out what could be done to strengthen the attack against the bubonic plague—a terrible disease that carries off hundreds of people in Eastern countries every year. The microbes of the disease are brought entirely by fleas that live on rats.

The third picture is an office at Singapore where a wireless operator is taking a message. What he hears is something like this: "Hallo! From Calcutta: three new cases of Smallpox and ten of Cholera reported here to-day."

This is the look-out office that the League has set up for the East. Its business is to receive messages from all the chief Eastern ports whenever there is a case of a bad infectious disease; and to pass the news on to ships that are voyaging to these dangerous destinations.

The smoking and eating of opium might come under the Health Committee of the League if it was not



such a big problem that it had to be dealt with by a separate committee. The business of the Opium Committee (more usually called the Opium Commission) is to find out how much opium is needed by doctors in their work; to try to arrange that there are only as many fields of opium poppies in the world as are necessary for medical purposes; to stop the secret smuggling of opium into different countries, and the secret selling of the dope at great prices. In seeking to carry out this last duty the committee have lit up any number of strange happenings, with three of which we will conclude this chapter.

A ship is landing her passengers at an Eastern port. A gentleman, who has just come ashore, raises his straw hat politely to a friend who has come to meet him. An inspector in plain clothes watches him. He goes up to the man and raises his hat for him a second time. Then he examines the hat. It has a false crown, and stuffed inside is opium.

Crates of oranges are being unloaded from a ship that has just come in. Suddenly an inspector interferes with the business and decides that some of the crates shall be opened. He handles one of the oranges, peels off the skin, and squirts out—not juice but opium.

An old Chinese lady steps ashore with her parcels, and makes her way with the crowd to the Customs House where every one must first go. In one hand she carries a basket containing a cat and five new-born kittens. The Customs officer insists on examining the basket. He takes hold of the kittens. They are dead. Their insides have been taken out and they have been stuffed with opium!

## QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON CHAPTER XIII

## Pictures for your notebook

Trace a map of Greece and Bulgaria. Put in Petritsch (near the River Struma), and mark where the skirmish took place.

Add pictures of the I.L.O. and if possible of Abyssinia, of Japanese and Chinese children, and of Indian women. You may also be able to procure a picture of an opium den. You might draw for yourself pictures of some of the enemies of the League, e.g. a rat, a flea, a plague microbe.

## Things to find out for yourself

1. Make a list of national quarrels settled by the League.

2. How much did we spend altogether last year on our army, navy, and air force?

3. Make a list of some of the things on which we make foreigners pay a tariff.

4. What countries in Europe have the highest tariff?

5. Who are the British Delegates to the General Conference of the I.L.O. this year?

6. What countries are members of the Governing Body of the I.L.O. this year?

7. Make a list of some of the Conventions agreed upon by the I.L.O.

8. Make a list of some of the diseases that the League is fighting, and find out anything you can about any of them.

9. Find out anything you can about opium.

10. In what countries is there still Slavery?

11. At what age are children allowed to go to work, and for how many hours, in the following countries: India, Persia, China, Japan?

## Clues

Books about the League.

Whitaker's *Almanack*.

Whitaker's *Almanack*.

Whitaker's *Almanack*.

Newspapers.

Newspapers, or books about the League of Nations and I.L.O.

Books about the League of Nations and I.L.O.

Books about the League of Nations and I.L.O.

Encyclopædia.

Encyclopædia, and books about the League of Nations.

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### Meaning of words

Aggression, tonnage, tariff, "tariff wall," customs, armaments, reparations, convention, ratification, statistics.

### Things to think out for yourself

1. Supposing Greece had refused to stop the great attack she had planned on Petritch, what ought the League to have done about it?

2. Supposing the money spent on the upkeep of our army, navy, and air force (that is, our armaments) was shared out, one year, among the voluntary hospitals of Great Britain (there are about nine hundred of these hospitals, depending on voluntary contributions), about how much money would each get?

3. If our army, navy, and air force were reduced, would it add to the unemployed, or would there be other work to be done?

4. Why do you think the Eastern countries had to be allowed a lower minimum age for child-workers than the rest of the world?

5. Does it do the people of Great Britain any harm if women and children in the factories of other countries work long hours for very low wages?

6. The "Labour Charter" which contains the rules of the I.L.O. begins by saying that the peace of the world cannot be brought about unless there is justice for the worker. What does this mean?

### Games

Act in dumb show the following:

1. The quarrel between Greece and Bulgaria.

*Scene i.* On the Frontier.

*Scene ii.* The Council Meeting in Paris.

2. Slavery in Abyssinia.

3. Catching the Opium Smugglers.

Or you can act in dumb show scenes illustrating the various work of the League, and make the audience guess the meaning of each scene.

### Reference books

As for Chapter XII, and also:

*A Little Book of the I.L.O.*, B. Bradfield. King, 2s. (1928).

*Arms or Arbitration*, H. Wilson Harris. Hogarth Press, 2s. (1928).

## POSTSCRIPT TO THE YOUNG READER

IN the Preface this book was compared to a Guide Book, and the reader was invited to come on an expedition in order to find out how he is governed. Now that his journey is over, it is hoped that he has not only made many interesting discoveries, but that he has a mind to go on making some more; for since the country visited is no other than the changing world outside his own windows, he can now close the Guide Book and watch the windows.

The most useful window for this purpose is the "Press." This is the name given to the newspapers considered as a whole. But a word of warning is necessary here. The newspapers do not always give a perfectly true picture. A great many things are apt to distort it. Lack of space often demands that details shall be omitted; the people's desire for sensation and sentiment sometimes makes it necessary to give them the things they want to read, rather than the things they ought to read; the firms whose advertisements appear in a paper must not be offended or they will no longer contribute the advertisement fees which are every paper's chief source of income; the owners of the paper expect the editor whom they employ to express their own points of view. Thus, for instance, when a Cabinet Minister makes an important speech you will not find it reported in the same way in all the papers. In some a good deal will be left out or put into small type; and each paper will draw attention to certain sentences by printing them in bold letters

or in headlines. What is thus emphasized depends both on the ideas of those behind the paper and the taste of those who are likely to read it. Therefore, it is important to realize that although the Press is the largest and most useful window it is nevertheless defective.

Books are another window, and they again must not be taken as always giving a perfectly accurate picture; for many writers have their prejudices and they can only write as they think.

Talking to people is another window which has the same defects as books.

But those who want to watch the world must not be deterred by these difficulties; for it is usually more entertaining to try to get at the truth than to shout a slogan. Those who compare one view with another and insist on fair play in their own judgments will come nearest success.

Some keen spectators of the wheels of government will perhaps become impatient and wish to see the wheels revolve faster. They may think of laws that Parliament might pass for the benefit of the people; they may see solutions to some problems of the Empire; they may find new undertakings for their Town Councils; they may be dissatisfied with the treatment of criminals, and distrustful of the League of Nations.

Supposing that these people are right in the reforms they would like brought about, they should, nevertheless, realize that there are at least two great difficulties in the way.

One is lack of money.

To enter into a discussion on money would mean writing another book. We can do no more here than hope that the reader has grown out of the belief that a



government can make money to meet its requirements. If he is ready to begin a study of economics in order to find out why, that will be a good thing.

The second great difficulty might be called a psychological one; for it lies in the will of the people.

People's desires pull different way in matters relating to government, and there are a great many people who have no desires at all. That seems unfortunate in a democratic age when we pride ourselves on a government made for the people and by the people. It is, however, clear to any one who looks with open eyes out of his window into the world, that this democracy is not as genuine as it might be. If the reader is inclined to consider this second matter further, that also is a good thing.

THE END

